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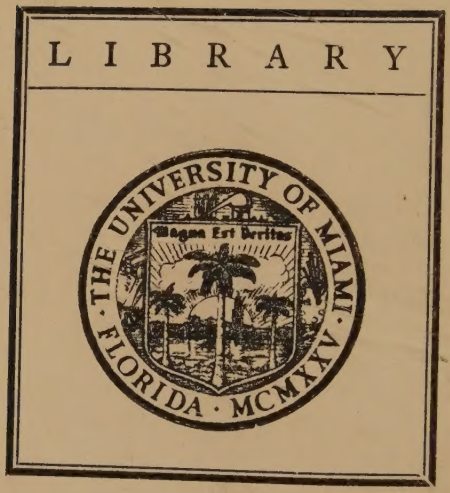

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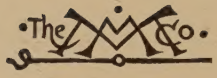
A HISTORY OF MODERN ENGLAND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A HISTORY OF MODERN ENGLAND

BY

HERBERT PAUL

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOL. IV

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A HISTORY OF MODERN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE STORM IN THE EAST

TWENTY years had not elapsed since the end of the Crimean War when the relations between the Sultan of Turkey and his Christian subjects again threatened the peace of Europe. We have already seen how a revolt in Bosnia and the Herzegovina proved too much for the financial equilibrium of the Porte.[1] When this insurrection had been in progress about five months, and there seemed no likelihood of Turkey being able to put it down, the Central Powers took counsel with Russia, and formulated joint proposals for the solution of an embarrassing problem. Their policy was communicated to Great Britain, France, and Italy, in a long and able despatch by Count Andrassy, Chancellor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The object of the Powers, wrote Count Andrassy, was to "localise the conflict" by preventing Servia and Montenegro from taking part in it. For this purpose Europe should unite to press upon Turkey the establishment of complete religious liberty in the revolted provinces; the abolition of tax-farming, familiar to all readers of the New Testament; a guarantee that the Bosnian and Herzegovinian taxes should be employed for the benefit of Bosnia and the Herzegovina; the

1875.

The Andrassy Note.

Dec. 30.

[1] Vol. iii. p. 404.

1875. appointment of a mixed Commission, half Christian, half Mussulman, to superintend the carrying of reforms already promised; and the material improvement of the agricultural population. The British Cabinet took the Andrassy Note into
1876. consideration on the 18th of January, 1876, and agreed to accept it.[1] So did the Porte, doubtless feeling that after all it was only required to make one promise the more. The Note, as the Russian Chancellor must have foreseen, if the Austrian Chancellor did not, was perfectly futile. As long as Bosnia and the Herzegovina were subject to Turkish rule, their inhabitants would be liable to massacre and pillage. "I have considered it my duty," said the Queen in the Speech from the Throne, "not to stand aloof from the efforts now being made by allied and friendly Governments to bring about a pacification of the disturbed districts, and I have accordingly, while respecting the independence of the Porte, joined in urging on the Sultan the expediency of adopting such measures of administrative reform as may remove all reasonable cause of discontent on the part of his Christian subjects." The proviso about "respecting the independence of the Porte" was not only empty verbiage itself. It reduced the rest of the paragraph to empty verbiage too. Twenty years ago Lord Palmerston had respected the independence of the Porte, believing that it would forthwith carry out reforms which in 1876 it had not begun.

The effect of the Andrassy Note was just nothing at all. The Turks ignored it, and the rebels continued to fight with unabated energy. Moreover, the insurrection spread. On the 20th of April the people of Bulgaria rose against their oppressors, and were treated by the irregular

[1] The delay was due to the extreme reluctance of Lord Derby, who detested intervention as much as he loved peace.

troops of Turkey with a savage cruelty which was unknown to Europe at the time. Events nearer than Bulgaria to the centre of power engrossed for the moment the attention of the diplomatic world. The Porte had lost control of its subjects, and the Turkish Empire was out of hand. The French and German Consuls at Salonica were assassinated by a fanatical mob, from whom they had rescued a Christian convert. Both the countries concerned sent squadrons to the place, and the representatives of the three Emperors met at Berlin. There Prince Bismarck, Prince Gortschakoff, and Count Andrassy drew up a Memorandum to which they invited the assent of the other Great Powers. This document proposed to insist upon an armistice for two months, during which care would be taken that refugees from Bosnia and the Herzegovina should have an opportunity of returning in safety to their homes. Here began the divergence of Great Britain from the main stream of European opinion. France and Italy accepted the Berlin Memorandum. Lord Odo Russell,[1] British Ambassador at Berlin, was informed by Lord Derby that "the Government declined to accept a plan, in the preparation of which it had not been consulted, and which it did not believe would succeed." Five days later the British fleet in the Mediterranean was ordered to Besika Bay. The Berlin Memorandum does little credit to the statesmanship of the three Chancellors, and would not in any case have restored tranquillity in the Balkans. But there are many ways of rejecting a proposal, and Lord Derby's implied complaint that the British Government had not been consulted was ominous of

1876.

May 5.

May 11.

The Berlin Memorandum.

May 19.

[1] Mr. Odo Russell assumed the courtesy title of Lord Odo on the succession of his brother Hastings to the Dukedom of Bedford. He was afterwards created Lord Ampthill.

1876. future trouble. It implied distrust on his part, and as a matter of fact he did believe that the three Chancellors were hostile to Great Britain. The

Deposition of Abdul Aziz. next act of the drama was played at Constantinople, where a Palace Revolution deposed the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, a man not conspicuously worse than those who went before him, and set up

Accession of Murad. his nephew Murad, a weak-minded boy, in his room. This was on the 30th of May, and on the 4th of June the corpse of Abdul Aziz was found in circumstances obviously intended to suggest the hypothesis of suicide. The substitution of Murad for Aziz made no difference to the policy of Turkey or the temper of the insurgents. But Bosnia and the Herzegovina were no longer left

June 22. Declaration of war by Servia; alone. Prince Milan of Servia declared war against his nominal suzerain, the Sultan, and proclaimed himself, or was proclaimed by his soldiers, King. He was at once joined in his efforts to procure freedom for the Christian subjects of the Porte by

and by Montenegro. Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, the fighting chief of an independent race in which every adult male was a soldier. This fresh complication of the difficult problem how to keep peace in South-eastern Europe passed unnoticed by the Powers, save for an isolated protest from the Duke Decazes, Foreign Minister of France.

The massacres in Bulgaria. Meanwhile the truth about Bulgaria was reaching England. On the 23rd of June the *Daily News* published a letter from its correspondent at Constantinople, Mr. Edwin Pears, which arrested and absorbed the attention of the public. "In Constantinople," wrote Mr. Pears, "nobody hesitates to believe that many thousands of innocent men, women, and children have been slaughtered; that at least sixty villages have been utterly destroyed; that the most terrible acts of violence have been committed; and that

a district among the most fertile in the Empire has been ruined for many years to come." He proceeded to give hideous details of the tortures and deaths inflicted upon a number of Christian girls by Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians at the village of Novo Selo. Mr. Pears was, of course, not a witness at first hand. He only reported what he had been told and believed. It was another correspondent of the same journal, Mr. MacGahan, who went himself to Bulgaria, and described from his own personal observation the havoc committed by the Turkish masters of that unhappy province. Mr. Disraeli's reception of the news was unfortunate. Not only did he try to discredit it as "coffee-house babble." Referring to the methods of torment depicted in the *Daily News*, he expressed an opinion that Eastern nations usually adopted "more expeditious methods." He afterwards explained that he could not be responsible for the laugh by which this language was followed. But a sneer is not usually accidental,[1] and the indifference of the Government to a question which was stirring the conscience of the country had been shown by their failure to propose any alternative for the rejected policy of the Berlin Memorandum.[2] The primary decisions in foreign affairs must rest largely with the Foreign Secretary, and Lord Derby's one object, like Falkland's, was peace. To intervene on neither side was his fixed idea, and he had an ally in Mr. Bright, who headed a deputation to the Foreign Office in

1876.

July 14.

[1] It is, however, clear that Mr. Disraeli did not intend to excite the laughter which his language naturally provoked. "I was sitting next him," says Sir Stafford Northcote, "at the time he spoke, and heard him say to himself rather angrily, 'What is there to laugh at?'"—Lang's *Life of Northcote*, p. 287.

[2] Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had always been accounted a friend of the Turks, considered this failure on Great Britain's part to act with the three Emperors as the cardinal error of their Eastern policy.—Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 555.

1876. favour of strict neutrality. On the other hand, Mr. Disraeli, whatever may have been his motives, leaned strongly towards the Turk. Some attributed his line to an oriental temperament, and others to indignation for the outrages too often inflicted upon Jews by the Christians of the East. He himself, who is entitled to be heard, always put forward as the guiding star of his action the interests of Great Britain as an Eastern Power. He could not in any case be expected to receive for gospel the statements, however circumstantial,

July 19. of a Liberal newspaper, and in sending Mr. Walter Baring from the British Embassy at Constantinople to Bulgaria the Government took the proper means of ascertaining the truth. But the House of Commons had no time to wait for Mr. Baring's Report, and on the 30th of July there was a

Mr. Gladstone's policy. The Concert of Europe. significant debate. Mr. Gladstone, the only surviving Member of the House who had been responsible for the Crimean War, felt it his duty to defend that strange miscalculation by dwelling upon the preponderance of Russia and the necessities of the time. He criticised Ministers, however, for breaking up the European Concert by their unconditional rejection of the Berlin Memorandum, and pleaded for local autonomy in the Balkans, such as the Danubian Principalities enjoyed. Mr. Disraeli replied in a spirit of moderation, and of not unnatural reserve. He justified the refusal to join the other Powers because, he said, they intended to occupy Turkish provinces, and he declared that the fleet had been sent to Besika Bay for the protection of British subjects. Just

Aug. 11. before the close of the session the topic was again raised, and the Prime Minister made a somewhat fuller statement of his policy. "Our duty at this critical moment," he said, "is to maintain the Empire of England." That might

be called the duty of all English Governments at all times. But it appeared from the rest of his speech that when Mr. Disraeli said the Empire of England, he meant the Empire of Turkey, which, not from "blind superstition," nor from "a want of sympathy with the highest aspirations of humanity," but for some mysterious reason undisclosed, it was the function of England to uphold. It thus appeared that in the judgment of Her Majesty's chief, or rather sole, adviser the twenty years which had elapsed since the Treaty of Paris were to go for nothing, and that though Lord Palmerston's prophecies of Turkish regeneration had all been falsified, Turkey was to be defended by this country as if they had all been fulfilled.

1876.

Mr. Disraeli's defence of Turkey.

This was Mr. Disraeli's last speech in the House of Commons, where he had sat, with ever-growing fame and distinction, for thirty-nine eventful years. The newspapers for the 12th of August announced that Benjamin Disraeli had been created Earl of Beaconsfield,[1] in the county of Buckingham, which he had represented in Parliament since 1847. At the age of seventy-three, Mr. Disraeli, whose health had never been robust, felt himself entitled to repose, and tendered his resignation to the Queen. Her Majesty, who would rather have parted with her body-servant, made the obvious suggestion of a peerage, which, in the case of a Prime Minister, is by precedent an Earldom. Mr. Disraeli was for becoming an Earl and resigning too, but the Queen pleaded the disturbed condition of Europe, which was certainly not such as to justify any public man competent to serve the public in relinquishing his post. Men are often deceived about themselves, and some men's doctors deceive

The Earl of Beaconsfield.

[1] Mr. Disraeli's title was the subject of some criticism as that which Edmund Burke would have taken if the death of his son had not led

1876. them, but in forming an estimate of Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, which, with the exception of one great and bold stroke,[1] dates from 1876, it is not irrelevant to consider that he ought in his own judgment to have retired for physical reasons in the summer of that year.[2]

Aug. 15. The Queen's Speech proroguing Parliament intimated that Her Majesty would be ready to join her allies for the purpose of mediating between the Powers at war in the East. Unhappily it was the Government of the Queen that had broken up the harmony at which Germany, Russia, and Austria ostensibly aimed. The war therefore continued, until Prince Milan of Servia, after several defeats,

Aug. 24. requested the good offices of the foreign Consuls at Belgrade. While the consequent negotiations were in progress another Palace Revolution broke

Deposition of Sultan Murad. Aug. 31. out at Constantinople. Abdul Murad was found or declared to be more imbecile than is permitted in a Sultan, and was deposed in favour of his

Accession of Abdul Hamid. brother, Abdul Hamid, the vilest of an infamous line. But while "Amurath to Amurath succeeds," the great human forces, even in the Turkish Empire, act without reference to the Yildiz Kiosk. Turkey was too strong for Servia even when to Servia was added Montenegro, and on the 1st of September the Turkish troops were once more victorious. It was plain that unless Europe or some great Power interfered Turkey

him to decline a peerage. But it was in some sort a tribute to the memory of his wife, who had been created Viscountess Beaconsfield when he retired from office in 1868, and had died in 1872, aged eighty-three. Mr. Disraeli's devotion to her, and hers to him, were even in the domestic life of England conspicuous.

[1] The purchase of the Suez Canal shares.

[2] Lord Beaconsfield, remaining First Lord of the Treasury, became also Privy Seal in the room of Lord Malmesbury, who retired into private life. He was succeeded as Leader of the House of Commons by Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chief Secretary for Ireland, was on this occasion admitted to the Cabinet.

would be triumphant, and her misrule would become worse than ever. The letters in the *Daily News* had excited such general indignation throughout Great Britain that even the phlegmatic temperament of Lord Derby was stirred, and he proposed to the Sultan, through Sir Henry Elliot, British Ambassador at Constantinople, an armistice for not less than a month. This proposal does not seem to have been very strongly pressed by the Ambassador. At all events it was declined, and public enthusiasm in England demanded interference by force to prevent further bloodshed. 1876.

At this precise moment, usually the dullest period of the Parliamentary Recess, appeared a pamphlet, called *Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East*, which sold at the rate of ten thousand copies a day.[1] The author was Mr. Gladstone, and the style has been compared with Burke's by a distinguished biographer of both statesmen. Accepting the stories published in the *Daily News*, and not contradicted by any authority entitled to respect, Mr. Gladstone protested that he could no longer bear in silence his portion of responsibility for the Crimean War. Otherwise he might be accused of moral complicity with "the basest and blackest outrages upon record within the present century." There was not, wrote this veteran statesman with all the fire of youth, a criminal in a European gaol, nor a cannibal in the South Sea Islands, whose indignation would not rise at the sight of that which had been done by "the one great anti-human specimen of humanity." These horrors might meet with the torpid acquiescence of unimaginative persons in isolated communities. Sept. 6. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet.

[1] It was dedicated to the venerable Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, who had finally given up his old friend the Turk.

1876. Those who approved of the Crimean War were especially bound to remember that the Treaty of Paris made not Russia but collective Europe responsible for that "integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire" which had enabled Turkish officers to rob, murder, torture, and ravish in Bulgaria. What then was to be done? Mr. Gladstone indicated that which in his eyes was the proper course. "An old servant of the Crown and State, I entreat my countrymen, upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require and to insist that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned." The effect of this pamphlet was prodigious, and the feeling against Turkey rose to a height which it never reached before or since. Although Mr. Gladstone did not propose to expel the Turks from Europe, and the context makes it plain that he was speaking only of Bulgaria, it was equally clear that he did propose European intervention, and that he meant diplomacy to be backed by force. He was not for peace at any price, like Lord Derby and Mr. Bright. He was for prompt and immediate action, not alone, but in alliance with the other civilised Powers of Europe. Having once taken up the question, Mr. Gladstone did not for a moment let it drop. Three days after his pamphlet
Sept. 9. appeared he addressed his constituents at Black-

heath in a speech which could not be reconciled with any idea of retirement.[1] Repeating with emphasis the policy laid down in his library at Hawarden, he apostrophised the Turks, and told them that though they might retain their titular sovereignty of Bulgaria and receive from it their regular tribute, they should never again, while the years rolled their course, employ violence, lust, and cruelty in devising miseries for mankind. That horrors can be perpetrated by the Turks elsewhere than in Bulgaria the world has good reason to know, and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe found fault with Mr. Gladstone for dwelling too exclusively upon that province. Mr. Gladstone, however, knew the British nation more thoroughly than Lord Stratford did, and he saw that the best way of guiding public opinion was to strike the iron, where as well as when it was hot. 1876.

It was hot enough; and just when it was hottest Mr. Baring's Report added fuel to the flames. If this able and authoritative document had contradicted in any material particular the narrative of Mr. MacGahan, the agitation would probably have subsided as suddenly as it arose. But on all important points Mr. Baring confirmed, and even heightened, the worst that had been told. The number of victims had, he said, been exaggerated, and some picturesque details, such as the sale of women and children at Philippopolis, were inventions. But the facts to which he testified were as bad as anything that had been alleged, and he could not put the number of Bulgarians slaughtered at less than twelve thousand. The fate of Batak was Sept. 19. Mr. Baring's Report.

[1] As he drove in the early morning through the silent London streets he reflected with pride that thousands of his countrymen would give their first waking 'houghts to Bulgaria (see Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 554). Seldom indeed has a political manifesto so deeply stirred the masses, though it appealed to no selfish interest of their own.

1876. enough in itself to justify Mr. Gladstone's language, and of crimes like these one instance may well suffice. The villagers of Batak were summoned by Achmet Aga to give up their arms, and were solemnly assured by him that if they did so their lives would be spared. Believing this wretch's oath, as Sir Hugh Wheeler believed Nana Sahib's at Cawnpore, they obeyed, and gave him their money too. Achmet promptly set the Bashi-Bazouks upon them, who slaughtered them like sheep. Twelve hundred of them who took refuge in a church were burnt alive. For this exploit Achmet received the Order of the Medjidie, which some Englishmen are not ashamed to wear. That Mr. Baring had no prejudice against Turkey is proved by his condemnation of certain persons, unknown or unnamed, "who, to serve the selfish ends of States whose only object is territorial aggrandisement, have not shrunk from exciting poor ignorant peasants to revolt." In his prefatory despatch, which accompanied the Report, Sir Henry Elliot made the unfortunate remark that British interests were not concerned in the question whether ten or twenty thousand persons perished in the insurrection. British interests were not concerned in the question at all. British honour imperatively demanded a full inquiry into the use which the Turks had made of the security afforded to them by British arms, as, for instance, the punishment of fifty innocent Bulgarians for every one guilty of rebelling against intolerable misrule. Mr. Baring's Report, which the Government published with promptitude and candour, assisted the agitation against Turkey. From innumerable platforms, including the Guildhall, the
Sept. 18. Government were denounced, and the recall of Sir Henry Elliot was, without sufficient reason, demanded. But the speech most damaging to

the Government was made by the Prime Minister, 1876.
who described as unexpected the declaration of war by Servia, against which the Andrassy Note and the Berlin Memorandum were both intended to provide. Lord Beaconsfield's temper did not improve with age, and he regarded attacks upon the Porte as personal to himself. At an agricultural dinner Sept. 20. Disraeli's attack on Gladstone.
in Aylesbury, from which politics were supposed to be excluded, he denounced designing politicians who took advantage of sublime sentiments for their own sinister ends, and compared them unfavourably with the perpetrators of the Bulgarian massacres. The reference to Mr. Gladstone was as obvious as it was offensive, and a tone of personal bitterness, which it never afterwards lost, was infused into the discussion of a political principle. Although Lord Beaconsfield frankly admitted that his policy was unpopular, his own seat in Buckinghamshire was prevented by a small majority from falling into Sept. 21.
Liberal hands. Simultaneously with this proof Lord Derby's despatch.
of confidence, whatever it might be worth, Lord Derby wrote to Sir Henry Elliot a wholesome, manly despatch, which would not have been endured by a really "independent" State. In it the British Ambassador was directed to inform the Porte that such atrocious crimes as those described by Mr. Baring aroused the righteous anger of the British people; that none of the Powers who had signed the Treaty of Paris could be indifferent to these abominations; and that acquiescence in them could not be justified on any political ground. Sir Henry Elliot was further told to demand a personal audience of the Sultan; to acquaint him with the substance of Mr. Baring's Report; and to mention four official murderers, including Achmet Aga, by name, demanding that examples should be made of them on the spot. Although the Sultan had

1876. come to the throne after the massacres, his whole career shows that he approved of them, and that the decoration of Achmet Aga was in consequence, not in spite of, his offences.

Meanwhile negotiations for the stoppage of the war were proceeding, and on the 5th of October Sir Henry Elliot threatened to leave Constantinople forthwith unless an armistice of at least a month were accepted, "as it would then be evident that all further exertions on the part of Her Majesty's Government to save the Porte from ruin would have become useless." Lord Derby had previously refused to join Russia in a naval demonstration against the Porte in the Bosporus, and England had shown herself through her Government the most Turkish in sympathy of all the great Powers. The proposal of an armistice was accompanied by the suggestion of a European Conference for the settlement of the
Oct. 11. Balkan Peninsula, and followed by a protest against the licence of Russian officers to fight in the Servian army. The Sultan's reply to Lord Derby was the proposal of an armistice for six months, which was rejected by Russia as unduly burdensome to Servia. Finally Russia demanded a brief armistice in peremptory terms, and Turkey
Nov. 1. granted it for eight weeks. By this time British indignation with Turkey had become mixed with apprehension of Russia. The London Press, except the *Daily News* and the *Spectator*, supported the
Liberal differences. Government, while the *Daily Telegraph*, hitherto a Liberal paper, and credited with the largest circulation in the world, turned against Mr. Gladstone with a completeness which left nothing to be desired. In Scotland and in the north of England his policy carried everything before it. Opinion in the south was less decided, and of Mr. Gladstone's former colleagues only the Duke of Argyll went

all lengths with him from the first. Mr. Forster notably held back, and told his constituents that in their zeal against Turkey they must avoid playing into the hands of Russia. As he had been spending his autumn holiday in the East and visiting Constantinople, this expression of opinion, or rather of two opinions, attracted more notice than it intrinsically deserved. But Lord Derby, in a long and very able despatch to Lord Augustus Loftus, British Ambassador at Petersburg, wrote with truth, by way of warning to Prince Gortschakoff, that, "however strong might be the feeling of national indignation against Turkish cruelties, it would be superseded by a very different sentiment if it were once believed by the English nation that Constantinople was threatened." Constantinople as a British interest had survived the opening of the Suez Canal and the purchase of the Khedive's shares. The Czar at once responded to this hint, or challenge, and gave the British Ambassador his word of honour that he had no designs upon Constantinople nor any intention of annexing Bulgaria.

1876.

Oct. 30.

Distrust of Russia.

The Czar's assurances. Nov. 2.

But before this assurance was known to the British public, though after it had been communicated to the Cabinet, the Prime Minister made a speech at the Guildhall less appropriate to the meeting of a conference than to the opening of a campaign. After a formal disclaimer of any desire for conquest, Lord Beaconsfield announced that there was no country so well prepared for war as England, because there was no country whose resources were so great. "In a righteous cause," he added, "England will commence a fight that will not end until right is done." The Emperor of Russia was naturally incensed. Why should there be war, and what was the righteous cause? He had done nothing

Nov. 9.

Lord Beaconsfield's threat of war.

1876. more warlike than assent to a Conference proposed by England, of which the avowed object was peace. Now, however, under considerable provocation, Alexander the Second declared at Moscow that if he could not obtain adequate guarantees from Turkey for the protection of her Christian subjects he would act independently, relying upon the loyal readiness of his people. If some of Lord Beaconsfield's colleagues had not been wiser than himself, it may be doubted whether the Conference would have met at all. As it was, Lord Salisbury, the representative of Great Britain, whose name had been announced by Lord Beaconsfield in his far from pacific speech at the Guildhall, left England on the 20th of November, travelling to Constantinople through Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome. He arrived in the Turkish capital on the 5th of December, but the Conference was not opened till the 23rd. Meanwhile a public meeting of a more than usually representative kind was held in London at St. James's Hall. The Chairmen were the Duke of Westminster in the morning and Lord Shaftesbury in the afternoon. Neither of them could be called a servile follower of Mr. Gladstone, who was the principal speaker. Anthony Trollope, the novelist, had always been a Liberal, though not a very active politician. But among the other conveners were William Morris, who acted as Secretary, Robert Browning, John Ruskin, and Edward Burne-Jones, who had scarcely ever meddled with politics before. Thomas Carlyle, no supporter of Liberalism, wrote to advise that "the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question and the country left to honest European guidance, delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men." Froude supported Carlyle.

Nov. 10. The Czar's reply.

The Conference at Constantinople. Lord Salisbury's mission.

The meeting at St. James's Hall.

Carlyle's letter.

The object of the meeting was not so much to oppose the Government as to protest against war with Russia, and to separate the Prime Minister from his colleagues. Lord Salisbury was mentioned with respect, and a reasonable hope was expressed that he would act at Constantinople for the welfare of the Christian populations. The Duke of Westminster, formerly Lord Grosvenor of the Cave, suggested that the fleets and armies of England should be sent to Constantinople, not in opposition to Russia, but for the coercion of the Turk. The Bishop of Oxford[1] appealed for military aid to the insurgents. The Nonconformists were represented by Dr. Allon, who argued that the blindness of British policy had made Russia mistress of the situation. Sir Henry Havelock, who had won the Victoria Cross in India, protested that, like many other soldiers, he would not fight against Russia on behalf of Turkey. Lord Shaftesbury, with all his unrivalled skill in the management of a public audience, did not quite take his hearers with him when he extolled Lord Derby's despatch to Sir Henry Elliot. They were more in agreement with Dr. Liddon, Canon of St. Paul's, a famous preacher and a Conservative in general politics, when he pleaded with all his eloquence for a British occupation of Bulgaria, and with Mr. Freeman, the historian, who exclaimed in language not soon forgotten, though often misquoted, "Perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India, sooner than we should strike one blow or speak one word on behalf of the wrong against the right." Those who asked whether Mr. Freeman and other Liberals were prepared to sacrifice British dominion in India might reasonably be asked in return whether they wished to strike a blow for the wrong against 1876.

[1] Dr. Mackarness.

1876. the right. Mr. Gladstone dwelt chiefly upon the positive obligation of this country to insist that the Christian provinces of Turkey should be independent, remarking that the Prime Minister, until he spoke on Lord Mayor's Day, did not appear to recognise the duty of England towards these Christian populations at all. Of Lord Beaconsfield's comparison between the Bulgarian murderers and himself he said nothing. It was left for Professor Fawcett, one of his most independent supporters, to say that the author of such a charge could never be forgiven.

The Conference of Constantinople was a solemn farce. The Sultan and his advisers, relying upon the dissensions of Europe, were from the first determined not to yield. So far as words went, Lord Derby's
Aug. 22. tone was firm enough. He had already said that the Bulgarian massacres made it impossible for England
Nov. 20. to fight on behalf of Turkey, and in a despatch to Sir Henry Elliot, Lord Salisbury's colleague at
Failure of the Conference. the Conference, he described the Commissions of Inquiry into the outrages with an irony not less severe because it was the literal truth. "Months after the massacre of hundreds of women and children, and of unarmed men, the Commissions are still considering whether such murders are crimes." The failure of the Conference was not Lord Derby's fault, nor yet Lord Salisbury's. As Secretary for India, Lord Salisbury could not be indifferent to the future of the British Empire, though his ostentatious friendship with General Ignatieff, the Russian Ambassador, was the subject of critical comment. Lord Derby's demands upon the Porte were moderate to a fault. Servia and Montenegro were to remain as they were. Bosnia, the Herzegovina, and Bulgaria were to receive a system of local self-government. For these reforms there must be adequate guarantees.

General Ignatieff assured Lord Salisbury that the occupation of Turkish territory was not regarded by Russia as an end in itself, and that she would accept any other arrangement which the Conference could devise for protecting the Christian populations. He did not, however, disguise his opinion that military occupation would alone suffice, and military occupation Lord Salisbury was instructed to oppose. The policy of the Porte was to meet the requirements of the Powers with an alternative scheme of domestic reform, and Midhat Pasha, the leader of Turkish Liberalism, was made Grand Vizier the day before the Conference met. While the Delegates of Europe, with Safvet Pasha as their President, were discussing the proposals of the Powers, big guns proclaimed the birth of the Ottoman Constitution. The diplomatists and men of the world who were assembled to protect the Sultan's subjects against their own Sovereign regarded this escapade on the part of Midhat as a practical joke. They could not be expected to take in a serious spirit the sudden declaration that the Sultan's Ministers would be responsible to a Chamber of Deputies; that this Chamber would be elected by ballot; that elementary education was to be compulsory, and that the Press was to be free. They could have read the French Constitution at home. That the Sultan intended to adopt it, or any part of it, they did not for a moment believe. The armistice was prolonged, and thus the danger of an immediate war was postponed. Such was the one positive result achieved by the Conference, which broke down altogether on the question of guarantees. The demands of Europe were gradually reduced to an International Commission nominated by the Powers, and the appointment of Governors-General with their approval. On the 20th of January these

1876.

Appointment of Midhat.

Dec. 23. The Ottoman Constitution.

Dec. 28.

1877.

1877. points were finally rejected by Safvet Pasha, and the Conference was at an end. It never had a chance of achieving anything after Lord Beaconsfield's speech at the Guildhall. Within a few
Feb. 5. weeks of its dissolution, Midhat Pasha fell from his precarious eminence, and was banished from Turkey. His successor was Edhem Pasha, a Turk of the old school, to whom reforms and Parliaments were alike anathema. At the same time Prince Gortschakoff addressed a circular to the Powers, inquiring what they were going to do now.

Feb. 8. When Parliament met, the Queen was unable to make any definite announcement on the Eastern question. Peace had not, since the conclusion of the armistice, been broken, but the relations between Russia and Turkey were such that it hung by a thread. "The proposals recommended by myself and my allies," said Her Majesty, "have not, I regret to say, been accepted by the Porte; but the result of the Conference has been to show the existence of a general agreement between the European Powers, which cannot fail to have a material effect upon the condition and government of Turkey." In other words, the Conference had failed; but the result had been to show that it might have succeeded. The Conference, however, was a model of harmonious union compared with the Liberal Party. Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll stood almost alone in frankly advising the coercion of the Porte. "I say distinctly," cried the Duke in the House of Lords on the opening night, "in this high place, in this house-top of Europe, that every insurrection against that Government is a legitimate insurrection." "There are other Powers in Europe," he went on, "besides the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs; and much as he may despise sentimentality in politics — forgetting that sentiment rules the world — forgetting that all

The Queen's speech.

Clash of Liberal opinion: Argyll *v.* Kimberley.

moral feeling is founded on sentiment — much as he may despise sentimentality in politics — I am greatly mistaken if sentimentality will not be too strong for him." On the other hand, Lord Kimberley, only a few evenings later, took up the old Palmerstonian line, and vigorously protested against "a change which would throw the Turkish dominion into the hands of any European Power." Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to avoid dissension, and to say nothing which could embarrass Lord Hartington. But when he was rashly assailed by a Parliamentary novice, he replied with a force so crushing and yet so skilful as to make it plain that he could not cease to be the first man in the House of Commons. The future of the Turkish Empire, however, was not to be determined there, nor yet in the Turkish Parliament, opened on the 19th of March with all the appendages, except an Opposition. Europe and England might suffer from divided counsels. The policy of Russia was simple and straightforward. Alexander the Second had disclaimed all designs upon Constantinople, and all intention of annexing Bulgaria. He had never abandoned his claim to protect the Christian subjects of the Porte from intolerable oppression if the other Powers failed to protect them. He made one more attempt to achieve this end by peaceful means, and despatched Count Schouvaloff to London with proposals for a European Protocol. Schouvaloff was followed by General Ignatieff, who had also been at Berlin and Paris, with the result that a Protocol was signed at the Foreign Office on the last day of March. The purport of this document was to announce that if the reforms promised by the Turkish Government were not effectively carried out, the situation would become intolerable, and must in the interests of Europe be considered. On the 10th of April, Turkey

1877.

Feb. 20.

Feb. 16.

March 10.

The London Protocol.

1877. repudiated the Protocol as inconsistent with the Treaty of Paris, and a fortnight later Russia declared war. In a Circular Note addressed to the other Great Powers, Prince Gortschakoff justified this step, and the invasion of Turkey, as well in Asia as in Europe, which immediately followed it, on the ground that the Turkish Government, by rejecting the London Protocol, had defied united Europe. Russia therefore was acting on behalf of Europe as a whole. To this document England alone replied. Lord Derby, who throughout the negotiations adhered to the principle of peace as the greatest of British interests, protested against the claim of Russia to express the wishes and rights of Europe. "It cannot be expected," he wrote, "that Her Majesty's Government should agree in this view." On the contrary, he and his colleagues regarded the presence of Russian forces on Turkish frontiers as an obstacle to internal reform, and they held that the plight of the Christian populations would not be improved by war.[1] They had certainly not been improved by the conference or the Protocol, and the mobilisation of the Russian army had not prevented the assemblage of a Turkish Parliament. The most credulous of philo-Turkish sentimentalists could hardly believe that the Porte would yield to persuasion after the failure of three distinct efforts in which all the Powers had joined. Precipitate Russia may have been. But there are circumstances of extreme danger and necessity in which precipitancy becomes a virtue, and patience a vice.

April 24. Russia's declaration of war.

May 1.

Lord Derby's protest.

Such was the opinion of Mr. Gladstone. But Mr. Gladstone was no longer Leader of the Liberal party,

Mr. Gladstone's isolation.

[1] Lord Derby added that the maintenance of free passage through the Suez Canal was a British interest, and that England could not regard with indifference any change in the ownership of Constantinople. On both points Prince Gortschakoff gave satisfactory assurances.

and among members of his own former Cabinet he was almost a solitary figure. Not one of them thoroughly supported him, except the Duke of Argyll, who was removed by the accident of birth from the centre of political power. Lord Hartington thought the time for Parliamentary action inopportune, and even Lord Granville, despite his intimate personal friendship, was unable to co-operate with his old chief. But Mr. Gladstone looked beyond unity to principle, and beyond the House of Commons to the nation. It was the announcement of a public meeting in Hyde Park which roused him to write his pamphlet in September 1876, and since then it was from the masses, not from professional politicians, that he had received either sympathy or encouragement. When, being himself ill in bed, he gave notice, through a Parliamentary friend,[1] of four Resolutions, his late colleagues actually met, and decided to vote for the previous question.[2] The Resolutions which these prudent men thus condemned as inopportune censured the conduct of Turkey in respect of the Bulgarian massacres; declared Turkey to have lost the right of British assistance, moral or material; pronounced for local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces; and desired that the influence of the British crown should be used to exact through the Concert of Europe guarantees for humanity and justice from the Ottoman Porte. Obvious truisms they seem now. But to the official mind, which is not altered by exclusion from office, truth seldom appears timely, and is often slain with the damning epithet of "abstract." Although the fact that two hereditary enemies were again at war could not make Turkish oppression less foul or

1877.

April 26.

May 2.

[1] Mr. Charles Howard.
[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 564.

1877. more endurable, it gave the moderate man a welcome excuse for being mealy-mouthed. Even Mr. Bright shrank from a policy which, humanitarian as it was, might conceivably lead to the employment of force; and Mr. Gladstone would have been left with only Radicals behind him if a series of public meetings had not convinced the watchers of the time that his was the popular side. Lord Hartington was honourably desirous of avoiding an open breach, and it was arranged that the whole party would vote for Mr. Gladstone's second Resolution, slightly modified, if he did not press the others. If Mr. Gladstone had refused terms of compromise and thrown himself upon the country, it is doubtful whether the Forcible Feebles of the front Opposition Bench would have ventured to resist him. But as he had no hope in any case of carrying his Resolutions, and was perfectly free to speak in favour of them, he wisely made a concession which, as he said, was "little more than nominal."[1] This private understanding was the result of a conversation held after the Academy dinner on Saturday, the 5th of May.[2] Monday the 7th was fixed for the debate, and a great day it proved in the history of Parliament. What was private had now to become public, and when the terms of the arrangement were disclosed, a preliminary discussion, in which Mr. Gladstone took a leading part, and which was intended to embarrass him, put off the main business of the evening till seven o'clock, by which time it was no doubt calculated that physical exhaustion would have set in on the

His Resolutions.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 565.

[2] On the morning of that day there appeared in the *Times* a remarkable letter signed "T. Carlyle," in which the public were warned that Lord Beaconsfield, "our miraculous Premier," proposed to employ the British fleet on behalf of Turkey. Carlyle's information was believed, not without reason, to be accurate and official. He knew Lord Derby well.

part of the principal performer. Such untoward circumstances would have spoiled many a speech. But at seven Mr. Gladstone rose, as fresh as if nothing had happened, and spoke till half-past nine as he had seldom, if ever, spoken before. Stripped of all rhetoric, ornament, and illustration, his argument was that the Turkish Government were directly responsible for the massacres; that persuasion having proved useless, the only remedy was force; and that England ought to have joined in the application of that medicine, instead of leaving Russia alone with her glory as the single champion of outraged Christendom. But no idea of this magnificent oration can be formed without reading at least the final sentences, in which the orator contrasted the course of diplomacy with the course of humanity. "Sir," he said, "there were other days, when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned — to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves, would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition older, wider, nobler far — a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice." Then, after a splendid eulogy of Montenegro, and a solemnly pathetic reference to the sufferings of Bulgaria, Mr. Gladstone made one of the few political prophecies which have been fulfilled. "I believe, for one," were his concluding words, "that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these

1877.

His speech.

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1877. provinces has sounded. So far as human eyes can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come from what hands it may, I am persuaded that it will be accepted as a boon by Christendom and by the world." The task of replying for the Government devolved upon Mr. Secretary Cross, whose successful performance of it greatly enhanced his reputation in the House and in the country. Mr. Cross was understood to be the special mouthpiece of Lord Derby, whose neutral and pacific policy he proceeded to expound. England, he said, did not want territory, or anything else. Regretting the war, and not believing that it could do any good, the Government would give support to neither side unless the Suez Canal, or Egypt, or Constantinople were threatened. His lucid and able speech may be said to have spiked the guns of the regular Opposition. Between Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone there was a great gulf fixed. One would have sided with Turkey, and the other with Russia. Between Lord Derby and Lord Hartington there was no substantial difference at all. For Lord Hartington would only have used force in conjunction with the whole of Europe, and the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs[1] was authorised to say that all the Powers were against coercion except Russia alone. Mr. Gladstone received no help from the Bench on which he himself sat, and the disorganisation of the Liberal party excited the just contempt of their opponents. The most prominent supporter of the Resolutions as a whole was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had been elected for Birmingham the previous year. As a member of the Birmingham League, Mr. Chamberlain had been a bitter opponent of the compromise embodied in the Education Act, and his enthusi-

Reply of Mr. Cross.

[1] Mr. Bourke.

astic support of Mr. Gladstone at this juncture was a symbol of Radical allegiance. It was not till the fifth night of the debate that Mr. Gladstone replied and the House divided. The majority for Government was 131, and far in excess of anything upon which the Ministerial Whips could have calculated when they came into office. Many Irish Home Rulers were absent, and of those who voted, the majority went against Mr. Gladstone. Except Mr. Patrick Smyth, a mere declaimer, though a fine one, and Mr. Martin Sullivan, they seemed to take no interest in the Christians of the East. Mr. Gladstone had achieved a great personal triumph, and once more vindicated his supremacy in debate. But the Liberal party had shown the vacillation of their purposes, the irresolution of their counsels, and the timidity of their nominal chiefs. Against such a heterogeneous combination, so unskilfully led, the Government were perfectly safe, whatever they did, or failed to do.

1877.

May 14.

CHAPTER II

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S POSITION

1877. Now that Russia and Turkey were at war the British Government had leisure and opportunity to consider the affairs of the United Kingdom. Whatever schemes for the future might be woven by ingenious brains, diplomacy had for the moment said its last word, and Europe, if indeed there was a Europe, could only look on. This was the policy of Lord Derby. It was not the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Unless the Prime Minister's speech at the Guildhall on the 9th of November 1876 had no meaning, he was in favour of defending Turkey against Russian attack, and would have done so if he could have reckoned upon the support of his colleagues. It is said that they were all against him except Lord Cairns. It is certain that the Foreign Secretary was diametrically opposed to him, while Lord Derby's words were almost exactly repeated by Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Cross. Lord Beaconsfield seemed to have retired into the background, and appeared so rarely that there were even rumours of his resignation. Meanwhile the Parliamentary session ran its regular course. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had such a tiny surplus that he could but leave things alone, neither remitting nor increasing, nor yet diminishing taxa-

April 12. tion. The benefits of the Judicature Act were extended to Ireland, though they were not accom-

panied by a proper reduction in the inordinate number of Irish Judges. Mr. Cross, the most successful of Lord Beaconsfield's colleagues in the conduct of legislation, carried his three Prison Bills for transferring to the central Government from local authority in England, Scotland, and Ireland respectively the management and maintenance of county gaols. Inspectors from the Prison Commissioners, who were under the Home Office, thus took the place of the Visiting Justices, who, however, retained the power of visiting, and a reasonable uniformity was substituted for capricious irregularity of management and discipline. In order to promote the smooth passage of his Bills, which had failed for want of time in 1876, Mr. Cross accepted from Mr. Parnell, an Irish Home Ruler, an amendment which provided that persons convicted of seditious libel, or, in other words, of incitement to rebellion, should not be treated as ordinary criminals, but as first-class misdemeanants, with all the indulgences conceded to prisoners on remand or awaiting their trial. Prosecutions for seditious libel are so rare that this change in the law was not of much practical importance. But it introduced for the first time in the United Kingdom that distinction between political and other offences which is a radical principle in most other civilised communities.

1877. Centralisation of prisons.

Political prisoners

It is also the first illustration of a new method adopted by a small number of Irish representatives. Charles Stewart Parnell, who had been elected for Meath in 1875, was a young Irish landlord. His mother was American, and he himself had been educated in England. He had not the natural gift of ready speech so often found among his countrymen, nor had he the slightest trace of an Irish brogue. Yet his Irish patriotism seemed to be fervent, and he was disgusted with the

Rise of Parnell.

1877. practical failure of Mr. Butt's policy. He set himself with dogged pertinacity to master the rules of the House, and to show that Irish Members, if denied a Parliament of their own, could bring the British Parliament into contempt. With none of Mr. Butt's respect for Parliamentary tradition and desire to stand well with the House of Commons, he perceived that if Home Rulers, being a small minority, were to succeed, they must take an intelligent interest in the business of England and Scotland as well as Ireland. Ably seconded by Mr. Biggar, a shrewd tradesman from Belfast, of grotesque manners and appearance, who sat for Cavan, he contrived, though not supported by more than half-a-dozen colleagues, to obstruct the progress of Supply by dilatory motions repeated
July 25. again and again. On one occasion Mr. Parnell was suspended from the service of the House for a couple of days, and Sir Stafford Northcote carried Resolutions which restricted the right of making proposals in Committee by a single Member, as it had always been restricted in the House itself. The weapon, however, proved totally inadequate, and the sitting, which began on the last day of July, was the longest yet known in Parliamentary annals.

This time it was an Imperial, not a local, matter which occupied the House. Sir Bartle Frere, who had succeeded Sir Henry Barkly as Governor of Cape Colony, and had been also appointed High Commissioner for South Africa, was, like Lord Carnarvon, an ardent advocate of Federation.
The South African Federation Bill. Lord Carnarvon's hopes of achieving this object were renewed, and he introduced into the House of Lords an enabling Bill for the purpose. The measure, being purely permissive, was supported by Lord Kimberley, and met with no opposition in the House of Peers. But before it came on for second reading in the House of Commons an event

of great importance had occurred in South Africa. 1877.
The community of Dutch farmers called the Transvaal, which had been an independent Republic since 1852, was annexed by proclamation to the British Empire. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who began life as an interpreter in Cape Town, and had been rewarded for his public services with the highest Colonial Order, was sent in January 1877 to Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, with an offer of Federation under the British flag.[1] The finances of the country were desperate, its vast mineral wealth was unknown, it was in serious danger from native raids, and President Burgers counselled submission. An able, enlightened, and courageous man, he argued in a powerful speech that the ideas of his fellow-citizens, who regarded him as a dangerous heretic, were behind the age; that their Republican Constitution had hopelessly broken down; that their taxes could not be collected, and that they were unfit for independence. The Volksraad did not agree with him, and he was forced to resign. But Sir Theophilus reported to Lord Carnarvon that the Boers were willing to become British subjects, and the two Delegates who visited England to protest against annexation were told by the Colonial Secretary that the step was irrevocable,

Annexation of the Transvaal. April 12.

[1] Sir Bartle thus described in 1879 the curious character of Shepstone: — "He is a singular type of an Afrikander Talleyrand, shrewd, observant, silent, self-contained, immobile. Forty years ago he might have been great in Continental diplomacy. . . . Like many of his countrymen, he is inclined to resent inquiry or control, and to treat in a hostile spirit all the information and all the suggestions about his department which do not come from himself. Hence it is not easy to help him, and his reticent habits make him very dangerous in troublous times. . . . He knows the Boers well, but has no sort of sympathy with them, and I doubt whether he can ever have their confidence and goodwill. . . . When you come to talk to him you find him full of good sense as well as of information, but it never seems to occur to him that he has any duty but to sit still and let things slide." — Martineau's *Life of Frere*, vol. ii. pp. 304–6.

1877. so that they must be content with autonomy, which was promised them, under the Crown.[1] In these circumstances the House of Commons had to deal with the South African Federation Bill. The Liberal party as a whole accepted it. Its chief opponent was Mr. Leonard Courtney, Member for Liskeard, who denounced the annexation as sure to be productive of future mischief, and denied with equal prescience that South Africa was ripe for the federative principle. But Mr. Courtney, though ably seconded by his friend Professor Fawcett, was hampered rather than assisted by Irish obstruction, which did not regard South Africa at all. The Bill was forced through Committee by a system of relays, a series of Chairmen, and the endurance of a continuous sitting from four o'clock on Tuesday afternoon till six o'clock on Wednesday evening. One side was as much exasperated against the minority of seven as the other, and the most emphatic advocate of strong measures was Sir William Harcourt. Mr. Butt declared that if he thought the obstructives represented the Irish people, he would retire from Irish politics as from a vulgar brawl, in which no man could take part with credit to himself or advantage to his country. But Mr. Butt's authority had been flouted, and his influence was gone. As for the South African Bill, it became a dead letter in the Statute Book, as Mr. Courtney always said that it would. The annexation of the Transvaal had momentous consequences, which no living statesman expected, or at least foretold.

The special vice of Conservatism is not resistance to innovation, which has often been salutary, and almost always plausible, but a desire to avert apprehended perils by changes neither necessary

[1] One of these delegates was Paul Kruger, afterwards President of the South African Republic.

nor advantageous. The Liberal Party had no monopoly of academic progress, and the Conservatives were equally entitled to bring in a University Reform Bill. Only they could not be expected to go very deep in rooting out abuses when the Chancellor of Oxford, and one of its Parliamentary representatives,[1] were Members of the Cabinet. What Oxford and Cambridge wanted was, in one word, secularisation. No institution can be either national or religious (and the Universities claim to be both) which offers any reward, or imposes any test, connected with religion. Ecclesiastical restrictions upon secular Professorships and upon lay Fellowships had been abolished. But Clerical Fellowships remained, together with the legal necessity that most Heads of Houses and all Professors of Theology or Ecclesiastical History should be in holy orders. To Lord Salisbury's mind, however, this seemed perfectly right and in the fitness of things. The object of his attack, first made in 1876, and now renewed, was what he chose to call "idle" Fellowships. Lord Salisbury was not a natural Conservative. Where neither the Church nor the land was concerned he had no love of tradition, and he did not shrink from change. He had himself been an "idle" Fellow of All Souls without submitting to any intellectual test worthy of the name. But he had certainly not been idle in the ordinary sense of the term, and some of the hardest workers in England, such as Lord Selborne or Professor Fawcett, had been assisted by Fellowships at the outset of their careers. It was possible for a Fellow of a College to live upon a small income in contented idleness and voluntary sloth. But it was extremely rare; and few systems have done more than "idle Followships" to encourage

1877. The University Reform Bill.

[1] Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gathorne Hardy.

1877. intellectual activity. Lord Salisbury was anxious to divert the money expended in keeping them up, and employ it in the endowment of research, otherwise known as the research for endowments. To scientific investigation he was throughout his life devoted, and for that purpose funds were no doubt required. It was also true that the Colleges were much richer than the Universities, and that a fairer division of profits would be favourable to the advancement of learning. Lord Salisbury's original Bill did not pass. But his second measure, which created a Commission for each University, with large legislative powers, became law, and led to some useful reforms. The clerical qualification for Heads of Colleges was in almost all cases abolished, the condition of celibacy for Fellows was abandoned, and the tenure of prize Fellowships limited to seven years. Their number was also diminished in favour of payment for work done, and the Universities were permitted to draw for educational purposes, such as the establishment of new Professorships, upon Collegiate funds.[1]

Although the session of 1877 was not a fruitful one, and men's minds were engrossed in foreign affairs, some Parliamentary incidents which led to no immediate result were far from being without significance. While a Bill providing for additional cemeteries in rural districts was passing through the House of Lords, Lord Harrowby, whose eldest son, Lord Sandon, was a member of the Government, moved an amendment allowing Dissenters to bury their dead with their own services in parish churchyards. As the numbers were equal, the amendment, by the rule of the Lords,[2] was lost. But Lord Harrowby carried it on Report, and the

[1] The Chairman of the Oxford Commission was Lord Selborne. The Chairman of the Cambridge Commission was Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of England.

[2] *Semper praesumitur pro negante.*

Government dropped the Bill. When the Lords are more Liberal than the Commons, some privilege or prejudice must be near its end. The House of Commons read a second time by a large majority a modest Bill to satisfy Colonial sentiment by recognising the validity in the United Kingdom of Australian marriages with the sisters of deceased wives. But ecclesiastical considerations proved too strong to permit further progress with the Bill, and our Australian fellow-subjects were politely reminded that they acknowledged incestuous unions. Mr. Trevelyan's annual Resolution for giving the franchise to agricultural labourers, though it was once more rejected, obtained for the first time this year the support of Lord Hartington as Leader of the Opposition. This genuine tribute to Mr. Trevelyan's energy and ability, as well as to the justice of his cause, furnished one more illustration of disunion in the Liberal ranks. Mr. Lowe voted against the motion, and Mr. Goschen not only voted but spoke. Mr. Lowe had ceased to count for much, or perhaps for anything. Mr. Goschen, on the other hand, was in the prime of life, and had been one of Mr. Gladstone's ablest lieutenants, so that his declared rejection of a chief plank in the Liberal platform boded ill for the future.

1877.

Liberalism in the Lords.

Colonial marriages.

County suffrage.

And where, all this time, was the Prime Minister? The effacement of Lord Beaconsfield is not the least curious feature of the session after he had accepted his Peerage. He seemed no longer to take any interest in legislation, and in the House of Lords, where he, of course, superseded the Duke of Richmond as Leader, his speeches were neither numerous nor important. His position appeared impregnable, until suddenly, without warning, he was censured in the House of Commons, and seemed to rouse himself from

Vote of censure on Lord Beaconsfield.

1877. slumber. The occasion was almost trivial. A comfortable, and by no means onerous, post in the Civil Service, the Controllership of Stationery, became vacant by the resignation of Mr. William Rathbone Greg, a philosophical writer of great ability and power. This place, one of a very small class, had been usually given to a man of letters. A Committee of the House of Commons recommended that it should be entrusted to a practical stationer. Lord Beaconsfield appointed a junior clerk in the War Office, whose father had been rector of Hughenden. The Minister's colleagues in the House of Commons had nothing useful to say, and a hostile vote was carried by a majority of four. Lord Beaconsfield then thought it time to say something himself. Why he had selected the gentleman from the War Office he did not explain. But he protested that he had no improper motive, and he remarked, with some point, that the practical stationer would be either a tradesman who had retired from business or one from whom business had retired.

The vote rescinded. Thereupon the House of Commons, with less dignity than speed, rescinded the Resolution. They would perhaps have done better not to pass it. But, after all, the recommendation of their own Committee had been disregarded, and Lord Beaconsfield would have had little right to complain if the vote had stood. An apology from the House of Commons is almost enough to turn a man's head, and it now appeared as if Lord Beaconsfield were beyond the reach of political accident. The enthusiasm with which Mr. Gladstone was received in the country had no reflection in Parliament, and the half-dozen seats the Ministerialists had lost since 1874 were no serious

July 29. indication of public opinion. The death of Mr. Ward Hunt rather strengthened the Cabinet than

weakened it, for Mr. William Henry Smith, who succeeded him as First Lord of the Admiralty, was a far more competent administrator. 1877.

But it was not upon anything happening in England that the eyes of Englishmen were fixed throughout the greater part of this eventful year. The war between Russia and Turkey was so rich in dramatic surprises that the numerous friends of the Turk in this country were for some time sanguine of his success. The Russians at once took the offensive, invading simultaneously Roumania in Europe and Armenia in Asia. The Roumanians were, of course, friendly, and still more friendly were the Bulgarians, whose ancient capital, Tirnova, capitulated at once to General Gourko. A gallant and determined stand was made by the Turks under Osman Pasha at Plevna, a town twenty miles south of the Danube. There, on the 31st of July, the Russians were completely defeated, with the loss of sixteen thousand men. The Shipka Pass, south of the Balkans, was the scene of desperate assaults by the Turks under Suleiman Pasha, who, however, failed to take it, and at the close of the month Osman Pasha was repulsed with great slaughter at Plevna. But early in September he defeated General Scobeleff and recovered the redoubt. In Armenia, on the other hand, twenty-six Turkish battalions with thirty-six guns surrendered to the Grand Duke Michael, and the Turkish defence in Asia was thus practically overcome. At this crisis in the fortunes of the war, when the tide was beginning to turn in favour of Russia, the Prime Minister took care that his sympathies with Turkey should be published abroad. At the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day he referred to the fact that the independence of Turkey had been the subject of ridicule a year ago, whereas it had been "proved

The progress of the war.

July 7.

Aug. 25.

Oct. 15.

Lord Beaconsfield's sympathy with Turkey.

Nov. 9.

1877. by half a million of warriors, who have devoted their lives to their country without pay and without reward." The bankruptcy of Turkey was true enough. Equally true was the gallant endurance of her unpaid and half-starved troops. But if Turkey had been really independent there would have been no plausible pretext for that "conditional neutrality" which, according to Lord Beaconsfield, was approved by all except "cosmopolitan critics," the "friends of every country but their own." The neutrality of England in the war between France and Germany was absolute. If it was conditional in the war between Russia and Turkey, that must be because Turkey was sustained from the outside by Powers who upheld the Ottoman Empire as a safeguard of their own interests, real or supposed. Lord Beaconsfield's philo-Turkish sentiments were not peculiar to himself.[1] They were shared by two at least of his colleagues, Mr. Gathorne Hardy and Lord John Manners. On the other hand, they found no echo in the speech of Lord Derby to a body with the high-sounding title of the Society for the Protection of British Interests against Russian Aggression in the East. He reminded these self-elected champions of a cause which was in safer hands than theirs that the Minister who went to war with a light heart[2] did not come out of it with a light heart; neither he, nor his master, nor his country. Meanwhile the Turkish arms underwent a series of disasters, including the fall of
Nov. 18. Kars, and culminating in the capture of Osman
Dec. 10. Pasha with his whole army at Plevna. This

[1] It may be mentioned, as an amusing illustration of public excitement at the time, that the Lord Chief Baron, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, in receiving the new Lord Mayor, according to annual custom, delivered from the Bench a personal defiance to the Emperor of Russia. — *Times*, Nov. 10, 1877.

[2] M. Ollivier.

exploit, from which the Turks never recovered, was directly due to the genius of Todleben, so conspicuous at Sebastopol a quarter of a century before. Two days afterwards a Circular Note from the Porte invited the mediation of the Powers, and suggested that the Turkish Parliament, which met for the second time on the 13th of December, was an adequate guarantee for Constitutional Reform. The Powers, however, regarding this offer as puerile, refused to assume any responsibility for it, and the war continued. Public opinion in England became greatly excited, and a Russian occupation of Constantinople, which had never been disavowed as a temporary measure, swam into the ken of those who watched the political sky. A noisy and numerous party, whose idol was Lord Beaconsfield, believed that in such a contingency he would fight, and the Queen, by paying him the honour of a private visit at Hughenden, let it be clearly understood that those who wished to be on the side of the Court must be on the side of Lord Beaconsfield.

1877.

Dec. 16.

A week before Christmas the Cabinet decided to summon Parliament for the 17th of January, about three weeks before the usual time. The ordinary session is seldom anticipated unless money be required or law compel. In this case there was no legal necessity; and if funds were wanted, it must mean at least preparation for war. The substitution of Mr. Layard, Minister at Lisbon, as Ambassador at Constantinople for Sir Henry Elliot, transferred to Vienna, was not a pacific measure, whatever Lord Derby may have thought at the time. Sir Henry Elliot, in spite of his callous reference to the Bulgarian massacres, was sincerely devoted to the honour and interests of his own country. Mr. Layard acted as though he were in the service of the Sultan rather than

Early meeting of Parliament.

1878. Jan. 1. Appointment of Mr. Layard.

1878. the service of the Queen. He was, in short, an Ambassador after Lord Beaconsfield's heart, a Palmerstonian who had been quite unaffected by the experience of twenty years. There were two parties in the Cabinet, and he favoured the party which intended to fight. Between these conflicting elements it was becoming more and more difficult to keep up even an appearance of union. On the second day of the new year Lord Carnarvon received a deputation of Cape merchants who were concerned for the defence of their Colony in case England should be at war. In reply he deprecated the encouragement of alarm, and protested that diplomacy was not so barren or helpless as to be incapable of preserving peace. His language was severely censured the next day in Cabinet by the Prime Minister, between whom and the Colonial Secretary there had never been much in common. But before the meeting of Parliament there was not any open breach. The capture of the Shipka Pass by General Radetsky opened the way for the Russian army to Constantinople, and the Porte, in despair, applied for an armistice, which was granted.[1] At the same time the Sultan appealed to the mediation of the Queen; and in reply to Her Majesty the Czar intimated an earnest desire for peace. The British Cabinet, however, distrusted Russia, and meditated various movements of the British fleet. On the 23rd of January, when Parliament had been sitting, to little purpose, for nearly a week, Admiral Hornby was directed to leave Besika Bay at once for the Dardanelles, to keep the straits open, and, in the event of tumult at Constantinople, to protect the lives and property of British subjects. In obedience to these instructions the Admiral sailed the next day, and received the Firman from the Sultan, without which, under

Lord Carnarvon's pacific speech.

Censured by Lord Beaconsfield.

Jan. 10.

Jan. 14.

The fleet sent to the Dardanelles.

[1] It was not, however, signed till the 31st of January.

the Treaty of London, no ship of war could pass the Dardanelles. When, however, he was actually opposite the Turkish forts, a telegraphic despatch recalled him to Besika Bay, which, for the dignity and reputation of the country, he had better not have left.[1] The official reason for recalling him was the receipt by Lord Derby, through Count Schouvaloff, of the terms on which Russia would conclude peace. Meanwhile Sir Stafford Northcote had given notice that he should ask for a Vote of Credit for six millions, and the Cabinet appeared to be on the verge of disruption. Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby both resigned. But Lord Derby, still cherishing a hope of peace, withdrew his resignation. Lord Carnarvon explained that he objected to the movement of the fleet, and to the vote of six millions, which he regarded as premature.[2] In moving this vote, two days after the occupation of Adrianople by the Grand Duke Nicholas, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a public statement of the Russian terms. They were certainly not immoderate as the consequence of a successful campaign, and they had very little to do with the aggrandisement of Russia. Bulgaria, comprising all territory inhabited by Bulgarians, was to be a free tributary province of the Turkish Empire,

1878.
Its recall.
Jan. 24. The Vote of Credit.
Resignation of Lord Carnarvon.
Jan. 28.
Russian terms of peace.

[1] Lord Beaconsfield said that there were six parties in the Cabinet. "The first party is that which is for immediate war with Russia; the second party is for war to save Constantinople; the third party is the party of Peace at any Price; the fourth party would let the Russians take Constantinople, and would then turn them out; the fifth party desires to plant the cross on the dome of St. Sophia; and then there are the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who desire to see something done, but don't exactly know what." — Lang's *Life of Sir Stafford Northcote*, p. 288. To be taken, of course, with a grain of salt.

[2] He was succeeded at the Colonial Office by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. The new Chief Secretary for Ireland was Mr. James Lowther, a genial sportsman and a Tory of the Tories. Sir Charles Adderley, created Lord Norton, retired from the Government, and was succeeded as President of the Board of Trade by Lord Sandon, who entered the Cabinet in place of Lord Carnarvon.

1878. with a native Christian Governor and a native militia. Servia, Roumania, and Montenegro were to be formally independent, as they already were in fact, with some slight enlargement of boundaries. Bosnia and the Herzegovina were to have Home Rule, which would also be given to the other Christian Provinces. The only points for which Russia stipulated on her own account were a pecuniary indemnity, with some acknowledgment, not specified, of her rights in the Bosporus and Dardanelles. There was nothing in these conditions to touch any British interest, though it was obvious that some at least of them would require the assent of Europe as a whole. The Leaders of the Opposition framed an amendment to the motion for going into Committee on the Vote of Credit, declaring that as the conditions of neutrality had not been infringed, there was no reason for adding to the burdens of the people. But, like the Cabinet, they were not agreed among themselves. Mr. Gladstone, who knew his own mind, told a Liberal meeting at Oxford that he had been reluctantly forced into agitation, and that for the last eighteen months he had done his best to counteract the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. The amendment was unfortunately placed in the hands of Mr. Forster, which were rather rough than strong. He moved it on the very day that the armistice, which had been observed for at least a fortnight, was signed at Adrianople. Mr. Cross, who knew his man, predicted that the amendment would not be pressed to a division. Feeling in London ran strong and high for the Government. A meeting of the City Neutrality Committee at the Cannon Street Hotel was broken up by the War Party, who proceeded to the Guildhall, put the Lord Mayor in the chair, and carried a vote of confidence in Her Majesty's Ministers. The merchants at the

Forster's amendment.

Jan. 30.

Jan. 31.

Jingoism in the city.

Jan. 31.

Corn Exchange did the same thing the next day. 1878.
Mr. Gathorne Hardy, replying to Mr. Gladstone in Feb. 4.
the debate, used language of unusual vehemence and excitement even for him. "Confusion and violence," he exclaimed, "are all around us; a spark may set on fire magazines of mischief and ruin which are not seen or understood. You do not know, you cannot know, what elements of deadly peril to your dearest interests are in the air." Mr. Hardy certainly did not know, and the panic which he sought, not unsuccessfully, to create was the offspring of idle rumour. The Music Halls took up the cry, and the silly burden of a silly song gave to the political vocabulary the name of Jingoes for those who wished to show, with reason, or without, that the resources of the country were equal to a conflict. At length, on Thursday, the Mr. Layard's telegram.
7th of February, a week after the debate began, Sir Stafford Northcote read in the House of Commons a telegraphic message from Mr. Layard that the Russians were advancing on Constantinople in spite of the armistice. Mr. Forster's nerve failed Mr. Forster's retreat.
him, and he fulfilled the prediction of Mr. Cross by asking leave to withdraw his amendment.[1] Amid the scene of excitement which followed, John Bright alone had the courage and sagacity Mr. Bright's scepticism.
to rise in his place and say, with decent circumlocution, that he disbelieved the Ambassador. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Sir Prince Gortschakoff's denial.
Stafford read another despatch, this time from the British Ambassador at Petersburg,[2] announcing, on the authority of Prince Gortschakoff, that all hostile movements of Russian troops had been stopped so

[1] It appears from his Diary (Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 192) that Forster took this course with the approval of Granville, Hartington, Gladstone, and Bright. But he does not say that any pressure was put upon him, and it is impossible to believe that either Bright or Gladstone would have shown the white feather.

[2] Lord Augustus Loftus.

1878. soon as the armistice was signed. Everything they did was done under the armistice with the consent of Turkey. Mr. Forster's position was not to be envied, and when he walked out of the House next day with Lord Hartington before the division was called, the Ministerialists naturally greeted him with loud ironical cheering. The
Feb. 11. British fleet was sent to Constantinople without the leave of the Porte, and Prince Gortschakoff announced that Russian troops would forthwith enter Constantinople. Lord Derby refused to admit that a precautionary movement of ships as a guarantee of British interests was equivalent to a military occupation, and there were ominous signs
Dissolution of the Turkish Parliament, Feb. 14. of war. The Turkish Parliament, having shown symptoms of independence, was dissolved, never to meet again. It had failed in its object, which was to throw dust in the eyes of Europe. Extra
Preparations for war. men were employed at Woolwich. All the vessels at Chatham were ordered to be made ready for sea. Admiral Hornby was reinforced from Malta. Lord Napier of Magdala was summoned from Gibraltar to take command of a possible expedition, with Sir Garnet Wolseley as his Chief of the Staff. The Opposition were divided and disheartened, so that the Government could command a majority of two hundred in the House of Commons. Even among the Radicals they had a staunch supporter in Mr. Cowen of Newcastle, who avowed himself an enemy of Russia, because Russia was the enemy of Revolutions. Mr. Gladstone's windows in
Feb. 24. Harley Street were broken on a Sunday by a Jingo mob.

But gradually the still small voice of reason
Feb. 19. began to make itself heard. Prince Bismarck told the German Parliament that he saw nothing in the Russian terms of peace which affected German interests. Prince Gortschakoff agreed not to

occupy Gallipoli if England would not land troops on the shores of the Dardanelles. The agitation resulting from suspense was removed on the 3rd of March, when peace between the combatants was finally concluded, and the Treaty of San Stefano was signed. The indemnity, of which fabulous exaggerations had been put about, proved to be only twelve millions sterling. Bulgaria, with an elected Prince, was so much enlarged that it would have a port on the Ægean. Fifty thousand troops would occupy it by way of precaution for two years. Roumanian Bessarabia was exchanged with Russia for the Dobrudscha, the territory immediately south of it. In Asia, Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, and Bayazid were ceded to Russia. The publication of this Treaty had a wholesome and sobering effect upon the Jingo mind. British interests were no more endangered than German, and what Russia took for herself was clearly not worth the blood she had shed, or the money she had spent. Nevertheless the Treaty raised at once a new difficulty of a serious kind. Great Britain, France, and Austria had agreed in 1856 to maintain the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire; and if its independence was a fiction, its integrity in the material sense was not. Lord Derby at once informed Prince Gortschakoff, as Lord Granville had told him in 1871, that no treaty could be modified without the consent of all the parties to it, adding that the whole Treaty of San Stefano, not merely selected portions of it, must be laid before a European Congress. Otherwise it would be left for Russia alone to decide which parts of the instrument required the sanction of the Powers. At this point the Russian Government made their first serious blunder. Russia had fought for freedom, and the terms of peace were sufficient proof that her efforts were unselfish.

1878. The Treaty of San Stefano.

1878. But Prince Gortschakoff put himself and his country in the wrong when he told Lord
March 16. Augustus Loftus that he "could only accept a discussion on those portions of the treaty which affected European interests." To this position, however, he adhered, and once more the diplomatic
March 26. sky was seriously clouded. The prospect did not
Resignation of Lord Derby. Calling out of the Reserves. improve when, on the same day, it was announced that Lord Derby had resigned, and that the Reserves would be called out. Lord Derby expressly stated in the House of Lords that this was not the only reason for his resignation, though it was one, and he afterwards mentioned that a proposal had been made in the Cabinet for the forcible seizure of Cyprus, together with some convenient spot on the Syrian coast. The relations between the two countries could scarcely be more critical, and it was justly thought that only the strongest reasons could have severed Lord Derby's connection with so old a personal friend as the Prime Minister.

Lord Salisbury, who took the Foreign Office
April 1. Lord Salisbury's despatch. without a moment's delay, issued at once a circular despatch affirming the necessity for submitting the Treaty of San Stefano to a Congress of the Powers.[1] This very able document stated the case for submission in the most uncompromising terms. "Every material stipulation which it contains," said Lord Salisbury of the new treaty, "is a departure from the Treaty of 1856." Some of the arguments which Lord Salisbury employed, as, for instance, the inclusion of Greeks in the new Bulgaria, are rather objections to the substance of the terms proposed than proofs of their incompatibility with the Treaty of Paris.

[1] Lord Salisbury was succeeded at the India Office by Mr. Gathorne
May 11. Hardy, created soon afterwards Viscount Cranbrook. The new Secretary of State for War was Lord Derby's brother, Colonel Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby himself.

But the "compulsory alienation of Bessarabia from Roumania" could not be reconciled with an instrument which expressly took Bessarabia from Russia, and it was undeniable that "the acquisition of the strongholds of Armenia would place the population of that Province under the immediate influence of the Power which held them." On the other hand, when he left the main ground of his despatch, Lord Salisbury was not equally successful. That Turkey could only pay an indemnity at the expense of her creditors did not deter her from criminal misgovernment which made her a public nuisance; and the failure of the Conference at Constantinople, which Lord Salisbury naturally regretted, was due, as he could not help acknowledging, to Turkey herself. It was in these untoward circumstances, when a Congress seemed improbable, and speculations on the possible alternative troubled men's minds, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his Budget. As half the Vote of Credit had been already spent, he raised the Income Tax from threepence to fivepence, and increased the tobacco duty by fourpence in the pound. Lord Beaconsfield's speech on the subject of the Reserves pointed, however, to a much larger expenditure in the immediate future. He did not, in fact, hold out much hope for a continuance of peace. Under the treaty, he declared, the Black Sea would become a Russian lake, and the Danube a Russian river. All the world was armed. Why not England? Yet England, as Lord Derby dryly remarked, had a fleet, and there was no "emergency" except one which affected the whole of Europe. The Opposition in the House of Commons was reduced to impotence, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson's protest against a war measure in time of peace received only 64 votes. Prince Gortschakoff's reply to Lord Salisbury left things as they were. For though the Russian

1878.

The Budget. April 4.

April 8.

April 9.

April 10.

1878. Minister's language was courteous, and even conciliatory, he firmly refused to concede the point in dispute. The Russian position in Turkey, notwithstanding that peace had been signed, was not altogether secure. The Mohammedan inhabitants of the Rhodope mountains rose in rebellion against the proposal that they should be put under a April 14. Christian Governor, and the Russians lost some five hundred men in putting them down.

Prince Gortschakoff's reply.

April 16. Just before the House of Commons adjourned for an Easter Recess of three weeks, which was a good deal longer than usual, Sir Stafford Northcote, in reply to Mr. Forster, assured the House that nothing had occurred for some time which either increased the gravity of the situation, or diminished the hope of a satisfactory settlement. Sir Stafford's word was considered as good as his bond, and Parliament separated in a spirit of confidence to which during the session it had been a stranger. Next morning the newspapers announced that the Indian Government had received orders for the despatch of seven thousand Indian troops to Malta. Immediate explanation of this step was of course impossible, although the new Secretary for India April 29. declared at Bradford that the "great England, to whose Ministry he had the honour to belong, was not prepared to stand by and see a great overshadowing cast upon the nations of the world," April 30. while Mr. Bright alleged at Manchester that the Premier's object was to sustain "that terrible oppression, that multitudinous crime, which we call the Ottoman Government." When the rhetoric of the platform was exchanged for Parliamentary May 6. debate, Sir Stafford Northcote could only plead the need of secrecy, and describe an unprecedented, if not unconstitutional step, as "nothing more or less than moving troops from one part of the Queen's dominions to another." The most valuable pos-

Indian troops ordered to Malta.

session in public life is private character, and nobody could believe that Sir Stafford Northcote had done anything wrong. He was regarded as an instrument in the hands of others, who thought it expedient, and even patriotic, to mislead the House of Commons. Mr. Chamberlain proposed to move a vote of censure, for which there were ample grounds. But this was much too strong a course for the Liberal Leaders, who framed their policy to suit the nerves of their weakest followers, and contented themselves with raising the legal question whether Indian troops could be employed outside India in time of peace without the sanction of Parliament. It is unfortunate that this grave constitutional issue could not have been discussed under more favourable auspices and in calmer times. For although there was not really, as the Government well knew, any danger of a European war, the very act impeached was a ground of general belief that the British fleet, if not the British army, would soon have to go somewhere and fight somebody. Nevertheless the respective spokesmen of the Opposition and the Government in the House of Lords argued with as much forensic aptitude and as much ceremonious formalism as if they had been back again in the scene of their old conflicts, the Court of Chancery. There were two main principles involved in the case against this transport of troops, apart from the political expediency of threatening Russia. The first was that the number of soldiers which could be employed by the Crown in Europe must not exceed the number prescribed by the Mutiny Act. The second was that the Indian Government Act of 1858 prohibited the application of Indian revenues to military movements beyond the frontiers of India without the previous approval of Parliament unless there were some sudden and urgent

1878.

The constitutional question: Lord Selborne and Lord Cairns.

1878. May 20.

necessity. Lord Selborne put these points with admirable cogency. But the fact that the British tax-payer was to defray the cost of transport diminished the strength of the Indian case, and he had to lay most stress upon the declaration in the Bill of Rights that "the raising or keeping of a Standing Army within the Kingdom, in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of Parliament, is against the law." The Lord Chancellor,[1] on the other hand, argued that "the Kingdom" meant England in the narrowest sense, and that the Crown had full control over the Indian army, although the House of Commons might of course refuse to vote money for its employment. When the lawyers had said their say, Lord Beaconsfield gave the Opposition some very shrewd advice. "You will never," he said to them, "be in a majority if your nerves are so very delicate. You must assert your opinions without fear and with perseverance; and if they are just and true and right, you will ultimately be supported by the country." Many Liberals must have heard or read these words with a feeling of bitter humiliation and a deep sense of their truth. They came from one well qualified to use them, for never in his wonderful career had Lord Beaconsfield shown any want of Parliamentary courage, which seemed to have altogether deserted the trembling, fumbling counsels of the Opposition. Since that deplorable 7th of February when Mr. Forster, misled by an erroneous despatch, executed in the face of the enemy his strategic movement to the rear, the Liberal Leaders had forfeited alike the confidence of their followers in the country, and the respect of their opponents in the House. There were two men in England at that time who commanded from different quarters admiration and enthusiasm.

Lord Beaconsfield's advice.

[1] Lord Cairns.

1878. One was Lord Beaconsfield; the other was Mr. Gladstone. "Bag and baggage" was an intelligible policy. So was the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. What was Lord Hartington's policy? What was Sir Stafford Northcote's? Nobody knew and nobody cared. The only man who took Lord Beaconsfield's advice was Mr. Gladstone, who did not need it. He spoke strongly in the House of Commons upon the duty of the Opposition to resist infringements of Parliamentary right, and was met by Mr. Cross with the pertinent inquiry, why no vote of censure had been moved. Keeping a party together is not an end in itself. If a party has no common opinions, and no common aims, the sooner it falls to pieces the better. The Liberal party in 1878 existed, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, only to show the triumphant preponderance of Toryism, the timid ineptitude of Liberalism, the undisciplined independence of Radicalism, and the personal supremacy of Mr. Gladstone. Lord Russell, who died at Pembroke Lodge within a week from the division in the House of Commons,[1] aged eighty-five, had never shrunk from attacking any majority, however large, in a cause which he believed to be just. He had faults of temper, and was not always loyal to his colleagues. To his principles, as he understood them, he was never false, and it was when they were least popular that he clung most closely to them. Liberals were not charged with timidity when John Russell led them, and accusations of prejudice against his country he would have treated with frigid contempt.

Weakness of the Moderates.

May 21.

Liberal confusion.

May 28.

During the legal debate about the Indian troops, who began to arrive at Malta on the Queen's Birthday, the return of the Russian Ambassador to London passed almost unobserved. Yet it meant as much as Lord Selborne's and Lord Hartington's

May 24.

[1] The majority for Government was 121.

1878. motions meant little. Count Schouvaloff was a singularly adroit diplomatist, popular in the society of London, and influential with the Czar. A few May 26. days after his return Lord Salisbury stated in the House of Lords that the probability of a Congress had much increased, and on the 3rd of June he The Congress of Berlin. announced that the Government had accepted the invitation of Prince Bismarck to hold it in ten days at Berlin. The representatives of England would be the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Great and natural was the exultation of the Ministerialists. Those Liberals who had shrunk from pressing the attack upon Lord Beaconsfield were inclined to congratulate themselves, as men are so apt to do, upon their own prudence and wisdom. For the Government seemed to have scored a striking and notable triumph. They had insisted upon the submission of the whole treaty to the Congress, and for that very purpose the Congress was to be held. Europe was with Lord Salisbury in his perfectly reasonable contention. But it was he who had fought the diplomatic battle, and the diplomatic victory was his. Some there may have been who thought it not quite characteristic of Count Schouvaloff to acquiesce so tamely in so ignominious a defeat, and to work so Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury at Berlin. June 8. hard for nothing at all. But when Lord Beaconsfield left London for Berlin, closely followed by Lord Salisbury, they appeared to have placed themselves and their country on a pinnacle of renown. On the 13th of June the Congress met in the Radziwill Palace, and on the 14th the *Globe*, a Conservative evening newspaper, published in The Anglo-Russian Convention. London the full text of a secret convention signed by Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff on the 30th of May. Seldom in the history of diplomacy has there been a more startling surprise. The triumph of England, and the discomfiture of

Russia, proved to be equally fictitious. Both were going into Congress on false pretences, having already arranged in secret the matters upon which they were professing to decide, and purporting to dispute. The boundaries of the new Bulgaria were by this document drawn more closely than the Treaty of San Stefano had drawn them, and the Bulgarians were excluded from the Ægean. The promises of Turkish reform in Armenia were made to England as well as to Russia, and did not thereby acquire additional or any value. The other Powers, including, and really meaning, England, were granted a consultative voice in the organisation of Thessaly, Epirus, and the other Christian provinces of Turkey. British creditors of Turkey were insured against loss from the indemnity. The British Government, on the other hand, expressly promised not to vote in Congress against the retrocession of Bessarabia to Russia, nor against the retention of Russian conquests in Armenia except Erzeroum. Both Governments agreed not to disturb the rules prohibiting ships of war from entering without the Sultan's leave the Bosporus or the Dardanelles. This document confirmed previous rumours, which Lord Salisbury had described in the House of Lords as unauthentic and unworthy of serious attention. The Duke of Richmond now admitted it to be genuine by complaining that it had been acquired through breach of confidence. It had, in fact, been brought to the office of the *Globe* by a copying clerk, who made more copies than one.[1] Although his conduct cannot be defended, it was the most important act of his life. He had taken all the interest out of the Congress, and flashed in a moment

1878.

Diminution of the New Bulgaria.

[1] He was prosecuted at Bow Street. But the disclosure of official secrets was not then an offence, and the magistrate refused to commit him.

1878. upon the world the truth for which the British public were to have been carefully prepared. The gist of the secret treaty was simple and intelligible. "Bag and baggage" had won the day. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire was nowhere. The Turks were to carry off their abuses in the only possible manner by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, were to clear out from the Province they had desolated and profaned. Lord Salisbury gave Count Schouvaloff a specific pledge that Her Majesty's Government would abstain from disputing any article in the Treaty of San Stefano which had not been modified by the Secret Convention. The premature disclosure of this singular document made Lord Beaconsfield's admirers look rather foolish, and reduced the Congress to a Chamber of Registration. Whatever Lord Beaconsfield could do for Turkey, he had done. For England he did nothing at all. His mental faculties had not been impaired by time, and at no period of his life would he have been more efficient. Prince Bismarck, a shrewd judge of men, thought him the ablest and most powerful personality in the Congress room. But he had sold the pass. Although he fought for the Turks with an energy which would have been highly commendable in a Minister of the Sultan, he could only talk. When it came to voting, his vote, and Lord Salisbury's, were in Prince Gortschakoff's pocket. They applied the policy of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet, from which, and not from the formal despatches of Mr. Secretary Cross, their instructions were really drawn. It was, however, a little unfortunate, and more than a little comical, that England, which had objected to going into Congress unless the whole Treaty of San Stefano were laid upon the table,

should have bound herself hand and foot to Russia before the proceedings began. 1878.

The comedy broadened into a farce when it became known that the British Government had also concluded a Secret Treaty with the Porte. By this agreement England undertook to defend the Asiatic possessions of Turkey by force of arms, and Turkey for her part undertook to introduce in Asia Minor, Armenia, and Syria such improvements as England might consider essential. This country thus undertook a special responsibility, shared by no other Power, for the welfare of the Armenian Christians. Meanwhile, so long as Russia retained Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum, the island of Cyprus was assigned to Great Britain, who would administer it for the Sultan, and pay him an annual tribute. This was not a very dignified position for the Queen of England, Empress of India; and when Lord Beaconsfield described Cyprus as "a strong place of arms," he forgot that it could only be employed in a war for Turkey, or a war in which Turkey was our ally. The people who really profited by the transaction were the Cypriots, and their delight at this change of masters was natural. They received with enthusiasm the British Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolseley, and their new garrison of Indian troops. The only other topic of importance raised at the Congress was the claim of Greece to an enlargement of her boundaries by the inclusion of Thessaly and Epirus. The Greek case was ably supported by the French Plenipotentiary, M. Waddington, and by the representative of Italy, Count Corti. But Greece had made a mistake when she did not follow the example of Servia, Montenegro, and Roumania by declaring war against Turkey. Although the proposed rectification of territory met with the approval of Austria

The Secret Treaty with Turkey. July 8. June 4.

Neglect of Greek claims.

1878. and Russia, Lord Beaconsfield spoke with such vehemence against any partition of Turkey that the Congress would not do more than "invite" the Porte to draw a new frontier line which should give Janina and Larissa to Greece. Such an invitation was made to be ignored, and Caratheodory Pasha contemptuously observed that he was not instructed either to accept or to reject it.

The Treaty of Berlin.

The Treaty of Berlin was signed on the 13th of July, after the Congress had sat for a month. It preserved the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire by violating the one and flouting the other. Bulgaria became under its provisions a self-governing principality with a Christian Government and a national militia. The Prince was to be elected by the population with the assent of the signatory Powers, and not to be a member of a reigning dynasty. The Ottoman army would withdraw from Bulgaria, and all fortresses would be razed. South of the Balkans there was formed a new province called Eastern Roumelia, under the direct authority of the Sultan, with a Christian Governor and Home Rule. No irregular troops were to be employed in the garrison of the frontiers, and regular troops were not to be billeted on the inhabitants. Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia were to be occupied by Russian troops for nine months, and no more. Bosnia and the Herzegovina were placed under the permanent administration of Austria-Hungary. Montenegro, which had long been independent in fact, was declared also independent in name, and received the port of Antivari with its seaboard. The independence of Servia and of Roumania was also recognised. Bessarabia was restored to Russia, and thus disappeared the last trace of the Crimean War. In return for this sacrifice Roumania was granted possession of the Dobrudscha, with the islands at

the mouth of the Danube, which had been Turkish. 1878.
In Asia the territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batoum were ceded by Turkey to Russia, with the understanding that Batoum should be a free port, essentially commercial. The Porte promised to reform Armenia under the supervision of the Powers. Promises to act, and promises to pay, could always be obtained from the Sultan by creditors or diplomatists. He regarded promises as the money of fools and the counters of wise men.

The Treaty of Berlin, so far as it went, was beneficial and advantageous. It removed a population of eleven millions from a grinding, blighting despotism, and gave them the freedom without which they could not hope for happiness or develop their natural resources. For England, for Great Britain, for the United Kingdom, for the British Empire, it did nothing at all. By the Anglo-Russian Convention the Government carried out the policy of Mr. Gladstone. No great Power directly profited by the Treaty of Berlin, which superseded the Treaty of Paris, except Russia and Austria. At the Congress Lord Salisbury was a cipher, and Lord Beaconsfield superseded Caratheodory Pasha as the leading advocate of Turkey. If he had been the Sultan's Minister, and not the Queen's, he would have merited by his skill and fidelity a statue of gold. That he sincerely believed the maintenance of the Turkish Empire to be a British interest must in fairness be assumed. But in this respect he was at least twenty years behind his age, and to the blindness of his philo-Turkish sentimentalism he sacrificed the real interests of his own country. Where Russia was wrong, as in appropriating Bessarabia, he acquiesced, though he did not approve. Where she was right, as in extending Bulgaria beyond the Balkans, he

1878. succeeded in defeating her for the time. Judged by his own standard of exclusive regard for the British Empire, and for the creed which became known as Imperialism, he must be held to have thrown away a magnificent opportunity. The President of the Congress was a truly wise and long-sighted statesman. Unscrupulous where Prussia or Germany was concerned, Prince Bismarck showed on this neutral occasion a penetrating and impartial spirit. Neither a philo-Turk, nor a miso-Turk, but a diplomatic observer and guide, he cared not for the map of Turkey but for the peace of Europe, and his eyes instinctively fixed on Egypt as the place most likely to disturb it. Egypt was subject to a rapacious tyrant, who governed it in the name of the Sultan and robbed it in his own. Ismail Pasha had almost exhausted the patience of the nations by his ruinous mismanagement of finance and misuse of foreign loans. Although the Suez Canal had been made by French genius and French capital, most of the traffic which passed through it was British, and it was on the high-road to India. Bismarck privately suggested that England should acquire it, and England, through Lord Beaconsfield, refused. To touch it would have impaired that sacred principle, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, England was the one Power who had proved by her splendid success in India her capacity for governing Eastern races, and good government was the only thing Egypt wanted, except irrigation, to make her prosperous. The dual control of England and France was, as soon appeared, impossible. The single control of England was afterwards proved to be not merely possible, but beneficial, and no Power responsible for India could be indifferent to Egyptian affairs. If Lord Beaconsfield had taken Prince Bismarck's hint,

Lord Beaconsfield's refusal of Egypt.

political purists might have condemned him on moral grounds. But he would have performed a feat in Imperialism compared with which the acquisition, or half-acquisition, of Cyprus was trivial indeed. There would, no doubt, have been difficulties with France, which had stipulated through M. Waddington that the Egyptian question should not be raised at the Congress. But they were difficulties which a real statesman would have taken pleasure in overcoming, while France might well have been satisfied with Tunis, which she required to round off her dominions in Algeria, and which Lord Salisbury told M. Waddington she might take when she pleased, so far as England was concerned. It must, however, be in candour admitted that British administration of Egypt would have been quite useless to Turkey, and might have been forcibly contrasted for rhetorical purposes with the Russian or European grant of independence to Bulgaria. But to the fetish of Turkish integrity no sacrifice was too great for Lord Beaconsfield to make. At any rate nothing was done, and Egypt was left to welter in a financial confusion as full of peril as of disaster. Lord Beaconsfield firmly shut his eyes to the fact that no change could be made at the Congress of Berlin. "After a stormy debate on the Balkan question," he "broke up the Conference, and announced that he should return home and take other measures."[1] The question in dispute was the Sultan's claim to place his garrisons where he thought fit. "Russia," says Froude, "at Bismarck's entreaty, yielded a point which had no substantial significance. Disraeli had the glory of extorting a concession by a menace,"[2] and the 15th Article of the treaty ensured that "the Sultan 1878.

[1] Froude's *Earl of Beaconsfield*, p. 250.
[2] *Ibid.*

1878. should have the right of providing for the defence of the sea and land frontiers of the province by erecting fortifications on those frontiers, and maintaining troops there." But it was all play-acting, theatrical heroics. Everything material had been settled beforehand, and Bismarck has left behind him an accurate summary of the situation. "Between the original conditions of the peace of San Stefano under Ignatieff and the results of the Congress the difference was politically unimportant, as was clearly proved by the facility with which Southern Bulgaria[1] revolted and became annexed to Northern Bulgaria. And even if it (the union) had not taken place, the nett gain to Russia after the war, and in consequence of the decisions of the Congress, remained more brilliant than those of earlier times."[2] Greece was taught the fatal lesson that she should, like Servia, have declared war on Turkey, and Roumania, who only took up arms under Russian compulsion, lost Bessarabia by her delay.

Return of the British envoys. On the 16th of July, when the Treaty of Berlin was laid before Parliament, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury returned to London in triumph. The Jingoes rent the air with shouts of joy, as though some great victory had been won. Addressing an enthusiastic crowd from a window of the Foreign Office, the Premier, borrowing a phrase from Lord Russell, claimed to have brought back peace with honour.[3] His hearers were not the sort of people to reflect that peace had been established long before the Congress met, or that it was a new kind of honour for England to restrict the liberties

July 18. of mankind. In the House of Lords the Prime Minister ironically described Greece as an interest-

[1] Called in the treaty Eastern Roumelia.
[2] *Reflections and Reminiscences*, ii. 116.
[3] See Lord Russell's speech at Blairgowrie, 9th September 1863.

ing country with a future, who could afford to wait, and, likening himself to the Founder of the Christian religion, said that he had been taken up to the top of a high mountain and offered all the kingdoms of the world, if only he would agree to the partition of Turkey. He would have met with easy forgiveness if Egypt had fallen, as it certainly would, to our share. The partition of Turkey, in its strict and literal sense, would have involved the fate of Constantinople, and there was at that time general agreement with Lord Derby's statement in his despatch of the 6th of May 1877, that England could not see with indifference any other Power than Turkey in possession of that city. But this was no reason why the British Plenipotentiaries should have opposed the enlargement of Bulgaria or resisted the claims of Greece. The most effective criticism of Ministerial policy came on this occasion from Lord Derby. With the Treaty of Berlin he found little fault, regarding it as an improvement on the Treaty of San Stefano. Against the occupation of Cyprus and the guarantee of the Sultan's dominions in Asia he protested as alike dangerous and inconvenient. At the same time he admitted that the peaceful appropriation even of a useless island was morally and politically preferable to the forcible seizure of Cyprus, and of a point on the Syrian coast, meaning Alexandretta, which the Cabinet contemplated when he resigned office at the end of March. This precise disclosure, at which Lord Derby had hinted before, provoked Lord Salisbury to an outburst of ferocity for which it would be difficult to find a Parliamentary parallel. He compared his "noble friend" and former colleague with the "Salamanca doctor," the mendacious ruffian who sent scores of innocent Catholics to the scaffold by his infamous and notorious falsehoods. "The same objection occurs to me in regard

1878.

"Peace with honour."

Lord Derby's criticism.

Lord Salisbury's invective.

1878. to my noble friend as was made to Dr. Oates when he brought forward successive fragments of his disclosure. When taunted with the fact, he said he did not know how much the public would endure." He denied that the Cabinet had come to any such resolution, and certainly it was never carried out. But Cabinets are not in the habit of passing formal resolutions, and the statement denied was not the statement Lord Derby made. Inasmuch as he had resigned, and as it was admitted that he spoke with the sanction of the Queen, Lord Derby violated no constitutional usage, and it is difficult to believe that the violence with which Lord Salisbury assailed him was due to political grounds alone. Two days later, Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Bermondsey, denounced the Anglo-Turkish Convention as "an insane covenant." The language was rhetorical, and perhaps "foolish" would have been a better word. But if this conditional engagement, based upon an impossible condition, had indeed been made at Bedlam or at Earlswood, it could not have more utterly failed to produce any practical result.

"An insane covenant."

As for Lord Beaconsfield, either the applause of his admirers or the attentions of his Sovereign completely turned his head. On the 22nd of July the Queen personally invested him at Osborne with the Order of the Garter, which was also bestowed upon Lord Salisbury. On the 27th the two Ministers were entertained at dinner in the Knightsbridge Riding School, and the Duke of Buccleuch, who had sat in the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, took the chair. It is the immemorial practice in British politics to regard the leading members of Opposition as only less eminent and responsible than the advisers of the Crown themselves. To borrow a simile from the national game, one side is in, and the other side is out. At the moment Lord Beacons-

field was at the wicket, and Mr. Gladstone, though not captain, was bowling. But the Prime Minister spoke as if he had himself been a Turkish Pasha or Grand Vizier, and Mr. Gladstone a Bulgarian rebel. "Which," he asked, "do you believe most likely to enter into an insane covenant: a body of English gentlemen, honoured by the favour of their Sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects . . . or a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egoistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents, and to glorify himself?" Mr. Gladstone had entered into no covenant, insane or otherwise, while he and his colleagues had for five years been honoured by the favour of their Sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects. Yet perhaps Lord Hartington took the thing too seriously when he complained in the House of Commons that Lord Beaconsfield had insulted the Queen, the Privy Council, and the Liberal party. He was really suffering from megalomania; and when Mr. Gladstone, addressing him as "Dear Lord Beaconsfield," asked when he had "maligned" the Prime Minister, that exalted functionary replied in the third person that Lord Beaconsfield was too much "pressed with affairs" to find evidence for a statement the reverse of true. He was in a happier vein when he described Lord Hartington's motion in the House of Commons as "a string of congratulatory regrets." The leaders of the Opposition paid too much heed to the attitude of the London populace, and the debate in the House of Commons, where the Government had a majority of 143, would have been insignificant without Mr. Gladstone's speech. The exuberant rhetorician was neither exuberant nor rhetorical. Frugal of his words and careful of his time, he

1878.

"A sophistical rhetorician."

Aug. 2.

July 30.

1878.

Mr. Gladstone on the Treaty.

submitted the treaty with Russia, the treaty with Turkey, and the treaty with Europe to a searching and exhaustive analysis. Dismissing Lord Beaconsfield's attack upon him with the remark that his character seemed to have improved since he was ranked with the authors of the Bulgarian massacres two years before, he criticised the Ministerial claim that Turkey had been "concentrated," observing that, if that were so, it would concentrate a man's body to cut off his limbs.[1] Mr. Gladstone's contrast between the fate of the Greeks and the fate of the Sclavs was singularly effective. Servia, Montenegro, Roumania, who made war against Turkey in reliance upon Russia, were rewarded with independence and an increase of territory. Greece, who kept quiet and trusted England, had got nothing. "The British Plenipotentiaries had spoken in the tones of Metternich rather than in those of Canning or of Palmerston or of Russell. . . . It was their part to take the side of liberty; . . . as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude." The private arrangement with Russia before the meeting of the Conference was wholly at variance with the public demand of the Government that the Congress should deal with the Treaty of San Stefano as a whole. The Anglo-Turkish Convention was a dangerous abuse of prerogative, the treaty-making power of the Crown, which could only be maintained if it were used in accordance with "precedents, justice, and the instincts of the English people." As a matter of fact, Lord Beaconsfield struck it a blow from which it did not afterwards recover. By this Convention, made behind the back of Parliament, England had rendered herself responsible for Turkish police, Turkish judicature, Turkish finance, and for the corruption

[1] Analogies, however, are wont to mislead; and that Turkey was strengthened by the Treaty of Berlin would not now be denied.

which paralysed them all. This grave, calm, and weighty indictment was not without its effect upon the thinking part of the nation. But at the moment, and in London, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury were the heroes of the people. On the 3rd of August they both received the freedom of the City, and Lord Salisbury, addressing an audience which was at least solvent, paid a tribute to the personal character of the Sultan, who had decorated instead of punishing the Bulgarian murderers. The sum of two millions and a half incurred in preparation for a war averted by public opinion compelled Sir Stafford Northcote to introduce a supplementary Budget, and would in the ordinary course have added to the taxes. But it was thought more prudent to raise the money by loan in the shape of Exchequer Bonds, lest the popularity of Imperialism should too soon be diminished by palpable expense. 1878. Aug. 6.

Lord Beaconsfield has been praised and blamed for not dissolving Parliament when he returned from Berlin. The censure is entirely undeserved, for neither the theory nor the practice of the British Constitution supports a Minister in advising his Sovereign to dismiss a House of Commons which gives him large majorities simply because he may hope to make them larger still. But even if the propriety of such a course could be defended, its prudence would in the circumstances have been doubtful. The opinion of the country was not to be gauged by the manifestations of Jingo mobs in the streets of London, or even by votes of confidence from the Stock Exchange and the Guildhall. Lord Beaconsfield's Whips could tell him that the clubs, the Press, the society, of the capital, were an imperfect index of national feeling. By-elections gave an uncertain sound, and the first contest after the Treaty ended in the return of the Liberal

1878. candidate.[1] Lord Derby's resignation had weakened
Aug. 27. the Government with the large number of people who like common sense tersely expressed, and believe that the truth lies between two extremes. Mr. Gladstone had recovered the confidence of the Dissenters, and acquired an influence over the working classes which he did not possess before. The session of 1878, the longest on record, had been chiefly remarkable for an extension of the Royal Prerogative in concluding secret engagements over which the representatives of the people had no control. Talk about British interests had been plentiful enough, but it had not been accompanied by deeds, and the staunchest champions of British ascendency, represented by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had expressed their disappointment with the Treaty of Berlin. Had Lord Beaconsfield followed up his popular and sagacious purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal by adding Egypt to the dominions of the Queen, he might have defied his opponents to do their worst. The occupation of Cyprus under the Sultan, which involved the payment of an annual tribute to Constantinople, was not regarded by those who think as an achievement worthy of England. Nor
Aug. 16. were the Acts specified in the Queen's Speech such as to impress any class of the community
The Factories and Workshops Act. with gratitude and admiration. Mr. Cross's Factories and Workshops Act, a useful measure warmly extolled by Lord Shaftesbury, did more to simplify than to amend the law; while of the three other statutes, which either attracted notice then, or deserve it now, two applied to Ireland alone.

The Territorial Waters Jurisdiction Act was

[1] The election was required by the appointment of Lord Lorne, Member for Argyllshire, the Duke of Argyll's son, and the Queen's son-in-law, to be Governor-General of Canada.

required by a singular miscarriage of justice. The captain of the German ship *Franconia* ran down the British ship *Strathclyde* within three miles of Dover, and caused the deaths of several passengers in circumstances which by English law amounted to manslaughter. Keyne, the captain, was tried and convicted at the Old Bailey. But the Judge reserved the questions, whether the crime was committed on board the *Strathclyde*; and, if not, whether Keyne, being a foreigner, was amenable to the criminal jurisdiction of an English Court for what he did within three miles of the English coast. These points were twice argued before the Court for the Consideration of Crown Cases reserved, and on the more important of them the Judges were literally at sixes and sevens. For while six of them held that the Central Criminal Court had jurisdiction, seven held that it had not, and consequently the captain went scot free. It was admitted, however, on all hands that Parliament could legislate for the three-mile limit, and accordingly, after an adequate amount of consideration, it was enacted that "an offence committed by a person, whether he is or is not a subject of Her Majesty, on the open sea within the territorial waters of Her Majesty's dominions, is an offence within the jurisdiction of the Admiral,[1] although it may have been committed on board or by means of a foreign ship, and the person who committed such offence may be arrested, tried, and punished accordingly." This was a more useful and practical assertion of British power than any made by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury at Berlin.

1876. Feb. 17, 1876. April 6. Nov. 13. Aug. 16, 1878.

Of the Irish measures the Intermediate Education Act established a Board for promoting classical and scientific instruction by means of prizes or grants to successful pupils and schools from a sum

Intermediate Education Act.

[1] That is, of the English Courts.

1878. of one million sterling out of the Church surplus; and the Sunday Closing Act did what its name implied to public-houses throughout Ireland, except in the five towns of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Belfast. Irish Members have seldom shown much devotion to the memory of Father Mathew, and some of them obstructed this Bill, which was not brought in by the Government, with considerable pertinacity. Almost all of them, however, supported the foreign policy of the Government, and the quarrels of the previous session were not renewed. But the more pugnacious section of Home Rulers set themselves against the general opinion of the House in a manner which led to a scandalous scene. On the 2nd of April the Earl of Leitrim, a resident Irish landlord, was shot dead on his own estate in Londonderry, with his secretary and the driver of his car. The crime was called agrarian with the more readiness because numerous evictions were pending on Lord Leitrim's estate. A few Irish Members, however, resenting this theory as an aspersion upon the people of Londonderry, brought the subject before Parliament, and endeavoured to prove that the murder was due to the same cause as the expulsion of the Tarquins from Rome. An attack upon the moral character of a man who has just met with a violent death is repugnant to decency and good feeling. But it must not be forgotten that this detestable murder was used in England to excite indignation against Irishmen as a race of assassins, who would rather take life than pay rent. Nothing certainly could be less wise than the conduct of the majority in the House of Commons who voted[1] for the exclusion of strangers, that is of reporters, although Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone were hooted

Irish Sunday Closing Act.

Murder of Lord Leitrim.

April 12.

[1] On the motion of Colonel King-Harman, a Conservative Home Ruler.

in the lobby for voting against it. Once the subject had been raised, full publicity, as Sir Stafford Northcote afterwards admitted, was far the less mischievous alternative. Lord Leitrim's murderers were never discovered, and the charges were neither substantiated nor withdrawn. The worst friends to Lord Leitrim's memory were those who voted that the galleries should be cleared. 1878.

CHAPTER III

THE FRUITS OF IMPERIALISM

1875. Nov. 23. Lord Northbrook and Lord Lytton.

WHEN the Prime Minister offered the Viceroyalty of India to Lord Lytton,[1] he told him that Lord Northbrook had resigned it "for purely domestic reasons." This was not quite so. Besides the financial differences to which allusion has already been made, Lord Northbrook and his Council were at variance with Lord Salisbury and the Cabinet on the question whether the Amir of Afghanistan should be asked to receive a British Resident at Kabul. Lord Northbrook, a disciple of Lord Lawrence's school, which was for leaving Afghanistan severely alone, thought that he should not. Lord Salisbury took the contrary view, less from fear of Russia, than because he conceived it essential to obtain more trustworthy information from Central Asia. Before Lord Lytton left England he conferred with Lord Lawrence, and with Sir James Stephen, who had been Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council in the time of Lord Mayo. Like Rehoboam, and so many others before him, the new Governor-General forsook the counsels of the old and followed the more seductive suggestions of his own contemporary. He had not been long in India when he wrote to a friend concerning the Amir, "A tool in the hands of Russia I will never allow him to become. Such a tool it would be my

[1] Vol. iii. p. 410.

duty to break before it could be used."[1] A man who naturally used such language was certainly not disinclined to pick a quarrel with the object of his suspicion and dread. Nor were the instructions which Lord Lytton took with him from Lord Salisbury likely to restrain him in giving effect to his wishes. After stating that the maintenance in Afghanistan of a strong and friendly power was the object of British policy, and describing the situation in Central Asia, the Secretary for India proceeded to say that "Her Majesty's Government could not view with complete indifference the probable influence of that situation upon the uncertain character of an Oriental chief, whose ill-defined dominions are thus brought within a steadily narrowing circle, between the conflicting pressures of two great military Empires, one of which expostulates and remains passive, whilst the other apologises and continues to move forward." The progress of Russian arms in Central Asia had during the last four years been considerable, and the Amir of Afghanistan had been offended by Lord Northbrook's refusal to give him an unconditional promise of support against foreign attack.

1876.

Lord Lytton's instructions.

The policy of Mr. Gladstone's Government, as they showed after the Russian conquest of Khiva in 1873, was to negotiate directly with Russia herself. Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, with Lord Lytton as their agent, adopted the plan of counteracting Russian influence with the Turkomans by the establishment of British influence with the Afghans.[2] To this they had been instigated by Sir Bartle Frere, who wrote to Lord Salisbury from Lahore, while he was in India with the Prince of Wales, that the alliance of the Amir should be

The new Afghan policy.

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, edited by Lady Betty Balfour, page 30. Every student of the period is obliged to Lady Betty for this most useful and judicious collection of documents and opinions.

[2] Lord Salisbury suggested a "secret treaty." — *Ibid.* p. 92.

1876. sought against the Russians, "essentially a conquering and aggressive nation," unlike the conquerors and rulers of India. But neither Sir Bartle Frere nor the Government understood the

Shere Ali. character or position of the Amir. The son of Dost Mohammed, who had been a strong and able ruler, Shere Ali himself was weak and timid. He had been much exposed to pretenders, including his own son, Yakub Khan, who took up arms against him. His favourite son and adopted heir was Abdullah Jan, for whose succession, as for the security of his own dynasty and power, he was anxious to obtain guarantees from the British Government. Lord Northbrook, following the example of Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo, declined to interfere with the local affairs of Afghanistan, and Shere Ali was left to take care of himself. While he remained in fact Amir, he would, he was told, be recognised as such. But it was not the business of the Indian Government to stand between him and any other ruler, who might be stronger than he, or whom his subjects might prefer.

First proposal of an envoy. Lord Lytton, however, approached Shere Ali of his own accord, and his first step was not a wise one. Through Sir Richard Pollock, Commissioner at Peshawur, he sent the Amir a letter announcing his own appointment as Viceroy, and the Queen's

April 24. assumption of a new title as Empress of India. He further proposed that Shere Ali should receive

Sir Lewis Pelly. a special Envoy, Sir Lewis Pelly, at some place convenient to himself, and discuss with him matters

May 22. of common interest. The Amir replied that all such questions had been adequately considered in 1873, but that, if the Viceroy desired further communication with him, he would send to India a confidential agent of his own. Lord Lytton considered this answer to be disrespectful, and

refused to accept it as final. A second letter was 1876.
therefore despatched to the Amir, in which the July 8.
Viceroy explained that he could not receive Shere Ali while Shere Ali declined to receive his Agent, and reiterated the proposal that His Highness should meet Sir Lewis Pelly. Otherwise Afghanistan would be treated as "a State which had voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government." If, on the other hand, the suggested conference with Sir Lewis Pelly were held, the Viceroy would himself meet the Amir at Peshawur in November. Sir Division in the Council.
William Muir, Sir Henry Norman, and Sir Arthur Hobhouse, all members of the Viceregal Council, dissented from this policy and recorded their protests. They thought the Viceroy's letter almost equivalent to a threat of war, and held that it was not fair to propose a temporary or complimentary mission, when the real object, as the Amir well knew, was the permanent establishment of a British Agency in Afghanistan. In the long and able Minute with which he replied to this protest Lord Lytton made the singular assertion that he had always thought "a permanent British Envoy at Kabul would be unnecessary and unwise."[1] Moreover, he had no proposals to lay before the Amir. He simply wished to know what proposals the Amir would make to him, although the Amir had intimated clearly enough, that he would make none at all. He deemed it dangerous to wait while Russia was strengthening her hold upon Afghanistan, and he felt himself confirmed in this view by communications passing at that time between Shere Ali and General Kaufmann, Governor of Russian Turkestan. On the 3rd of September Sir Richard Pollock received from Shere Ali a suggestion that Lord Lytton should

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 74.

1876. send for his own agent at Kabul, and learn from him what he wanted to ascertain. Although this answer was not, on the face of it, more respectful than its predecessor, Lord Lytton prudently acquiesced in it, and Atta Mohammed Khan was accordingly summoned to Simla. He reported that the Amir was disappointed at not obtaining from Lord Northbrook a definite alliance, with money and support; that in his opinion no Englishman would be safe at Kabul; and that if he received a British mission, he should have to receive a Russian one. He wanted neither. He was in fact thoroughly frightened, being, as Sir Bartle Frere had put it to Lord Salisbury, an "earthen pipkin between two iron pots." Lord Lytton endeavoured to reassure him by offering him an alliance, an annual subsidy, and the acknowledgment of Abdullah Jan as his heir, provided that the Amir abstained from all communication with Russia, deputed an Envoy to reside at the Viceregal Court, and received special missions from Calcutta when desired to do so by the Viceroy. There must also be a British Agency on the Afghan frontier. Against this stipulation Sir Lewis Pelly protested on the ground that the Amir would never assent to it. But Lord Lytton insisted, and at the end of October the native agent returned to Kabul.

Shere Ali's position.

Occupation of Quetta.

Before any further message had reached Lord Lytton from Shere Ali, the occupation of Quetta, resulting from the conclusion of a treaty with the Khan of Khelat, signed at Jacobabad, had given the Indian Government command of the Bolan Pass into Afghanistan. This seizure of Quetta, though not directly involving either war or warlike preparations, was the first distinct departure from the "masterly inactivity" which the forward school was destined for a time to supersede. Upon a half hostile and thoroughly terrified Amir the effect of

Dec. 8.

this sudden annexation was not likely to be soothing. 1876.
He agreed, however, after much hesitation and with great reluctance, that two of his Ministers should meet Sir Lewis Pelly at Peshawur. The Conference accordingly began on the 27th of January 1877. But it was doomed from the first to failure. The Amir's principal Envoy, Syud Noor Mahommed Shah, absolutely rejected the idea of resident British officers on the frontier, and on the 19th of February Sir Lewis Pelly broke off the Conference. Lord Lytton caused Shere Ali to be informed that, as he had repudiated the policy recommended to him, he could no longer rely upon the support of the British Government, and thus a vacillating ally was converted into a bitter opponent. When Syud Mahommed died on the 29th of March, Lord Lytton described this event as having closed the Conference of Peshawur. But he had in fact already closed it himself by his angry letter of the 3rd,[1] and had driven the Amir into the arms of Russia. Sir Lewis Pelly left Peshawur, and the native agent of Great Britain, whose information had been sufficient for all practical purposes, was withdrawn from Kabul. Lord Lytton then turned to a frontier officer, Major Cavagnari, a naturalised Frenchman with an Irish mother, and appointed him in May to be Deputy Commissioner at Peshawur. "Complete indifference and unbroken reserve" was defined by the Viceroy as the attitude which should henceforth be adopted towards Shere Ali. The year 1877 was indeed one of great and absorbing occupation for the Government of India. A famine raged in Bombay and Madras which taxed all the resources of the central Administration. For while the Governor of Bombay, Sir Philip Wodehouse, proved equal to the emergency, the Duke of Buckingham

1877. Conference at Peshawur.

Its failure.

March 3.

April 3.

Major Cavagnari.

The famine.

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 137–154.

1877. in Madras was less efficient, and Lord Lytton, acting through Sir Richard Temple, found it necessary to assume responsibility himself. With a wisdom and foresight that cannot be too highly praised he substituted a general system of relief for a chaos of petty local works, and prohibited official supersession of private enterprise, thereby saving thousands of lives. At the same time the Famine Insurance Fund was established by Sir John Strachey, to the incalculable benefit of India. This Fund, amounting to a million and a half each year, or fifteen millions sterling in ten years, was made up partly by an agricultural cess, and partly by a licence on trades. Thus provision was made of a surplus, for use if required, though no particular sum was definitely set apart for famines.

It was not till the summer of 1878 that Russian activity in Central Asia again drew the Viceroy's attention to the affairs of Afghanistan. Lord Salisbury had in 1877 convinced himself that alarm of Russia was unfounded, "the crude excursion of an untutored fancy," and that "airy fancies, raised by unreasonable fears," would not stand the test of large-scale maps. He also assured the Duke of Argyll in the House of Lords that there had been no change in the Afghan policy of the Indian Government. He had apparently gone back to the principles of Lord Lawrence, which he held ten years before, and lost no opportunity of casting ridicule upon the Russian scare. In the spring of 1878 Lord Salisbury left the India Office for the Foreign Office, and the movement of Indian troops to Malta was followed by the despatch of a Russian mission to Kabul. To the new Secretary of State the Viceroy wrote at this time in the language of dread, if not of actual panic. He described Shere Ali as "not only a savage, but a savage with a touch of insanity"; declared that his "feelings

1878. Russian mission at Kabul.

April 8.

towards us" were "those of bitter personal animosity"; and added that "during the last twelve months he had been arming to the teeth." That Shere Ali's mind was unsound is more than probable. But that was a strange reason for seeking an alliance with him, and offering to maintain him on his throne. As for the personal animosity, it was partly fear, and largely the result of approaches which he took to be the preludes of conquest. At that time, however, Lord Lytton expected war with Russia, and thought that the opportunity would be favourable for the disintegration of Afghanistan. 1878.

One of Lord Cranbrook's earliest official duties as Secretary for India was to consider and approve of the Vernacular Press Act, by which editors of Indian newspapers published in oriental languages might be warned and, if obstinate, silenced for promoting disaffection to the Government. This law, which was in some respects identical with provisions in the Irish Coercion Act of 1870, was not required by Lord Lytton's predecessors, and has not been needed by his successors. It was in his opinion justified by articles which taunted England with fear of Russia. Sir William Muir, Sir Erskine Perry, and Colonel Yule dissented in the Viceroy's Council from a policy which had been abandoned in India for more than forty years. Even Lord Cranbrook, who was quite untainted with Liberalism, would not allow the clause exempting from the Act an editor who submitted his articles to an official Censor, dryly remarking that "any censor of proofs would in fact write the newspaper which he revised." And, in the very despatch which approved of the Act, he inserted words condemnatory of its whole principle and scope. Lord Lytton in his Council had spoken with sarcasm of "those people whose minds are

Vernacular Press Act.

Dissents in the Council.

Lord Cranbrook's criticisms.

May 31.

1878. governed by phrases, and who look upon the liberty of the Press as a fetish to be worshipped, rather than as a privilege to be worthily earned and rationally enjoyed." This is just the sort of phrase by which wise men's minds are not governed. For it simply means that the Press should be at liberty to print what the authorities think ought to be printed. "Men whose minds are governed by phrases" is phrase-makers' claptrap. But Lord Cranbrook used the words of sense and statesmanship when he wrote, "All the most experienced Indian administrators have felt that the great difficulty of Indian administration is the difficulty of ascertaining facts of social condition and political sentiment; and the vernacular Press has always been considered one valuable means of getting at these facts, as shown by the careful attention given by your Excellency's Government, by that of your predecessors, and by this office, to the translated extracts from native newspapers which are regularly supplied to you." Of this valuable source, which was not only a conduit-pipe but a safety-valve, Lord Lytton voluntarily deprived himself at the time when he needed it most.

Arrival of the Russian Envoy.

Russia had given England a pledge that she would not concern herself with the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and although that did not necessarily preclude her from placing a representative at the Court of Kabul, there can be no doubt that in the spring of 1878 she was animated by hostile intentions to this country. It was not until the Congress of Berlin had separated and the treaty had been signed that the Russian Envoy, General
July 22. Stoletoff, arrived at Kabul. The object of sending him was to embroil Afghanistan with Great Britain, and the success of the enterprise was complete. Clumsy as the trap was, Lord Lytton walked, or

rather ran, into it without a moment's delay. The Amir, who was quite as much afraid of Russia as of England, protested against a Russian officer in Kabul, and declared that he could not answer for his safety. General Kaufmann told him that the mission could not be revoked, and that the Amir would be held responsible. After the arrival of Stoletoff at Kabul Lord Lytton wrote again to Lord Cranbrook, and argued in much detail for a rectification of the north-west frontier. "The great natural boundary of India," he said, "to the north-west is the watershed formed by the range of the Hindu-Kush and its spurs; and that range, with such outposts as may be necessary to secure the passes, ought to be our ultimate boundary." The action of Russia Lord Lytton considered "most injudicious," even while he swallowed the bait. Always abounding in sneers at "masterly inactivity," he attributed to it, with singular logic, the failure of his own negotiations at Peshawur, and in the same breath proposed, as Prince Gortschakoff meant that he should, the immediate despatch of a British mission to Kabul. For the head of it he recommended Sir Neville Chamberlain, whose selection "would be agreeable to Lawrence and the whole Punjab school."[1] To this proposal Lord Cranbrook in his innocence promptly assented, and General Stoletoff, having fulfilled the purpose of his errand, at once left Kabul. Before Sir Neville Chamberlain could start, and even before his coming could be notified to the Amir, Abdullah Jan, the heir to the throne, died. A letter of condolence from the Viceroy was almost immediately followed by Sir Neville Chamberlain's arrival at Peshawur, before Shere Ali could have acknowledged the intimation of his appointment. But Lord Lytton's mind had

1878.

The north-west frontier.

Aug. 8.

Mission of Sir Neville Chamberlain.

Aug. 21.

Sept. 12.

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 259.

1878. soared far above the original subject of dispute with the Amir, and he was now absorbed in that "rectification" of the frontier which appeared to him essential for resisting the encroachments of Russia. The old-fashioned idea that it was an advantage to have mountains between oneself and the enemy he dismissed with contempt as "præ-Napoleonic," forgetting that the true barrier against Russia was a strong, friendly, and independent Afghanistan. Meanwhile Sir Neville Chamberlain, having waited for ten days at Peshawur, and nothing having been heard from Kabul, advanced by instruction to Jamrud, which also is British territory, though on the border. He had an escort of two hundred men, who were enough to excite suspicion, but not to enforce compliance. From Jamrud a small detachment under Major Cavagnari proceeded to Ali Musjid, which was in the possession of friendly Khyberis, and there met Faiz Mahommed Khan, the representative of the Amir. When Cavagnari announced that the Mission would enter Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass, the Khan replied that he could not permit the entrance, as he was without orders from the Amir. Although Cavagnari employed much tact, and the Khan addressed him as a personal friend, it was impossible to obtain a more favourable answer, and on hearing from his subordinate what had occurred, Sir Neville Chamberlain at once returned to Peshawur. Thus the British Government had been wantonly exposed to public humiliation, and the Viceroy had brought upon himself a direct rebuff by sending a distinguished military officer in ignorance of the reception which awaited him. Nothing had been neglected to ensure the failure of the Mission, and people at home naturally thought that Lord Lytton could not have desired its success. Sir Neville

Repulse of the mission.

Chamberlain felt the affront to which he had been exposed, but Lord Lytton informed the Secretary of State that "the sacrifice of his personal dignity was essentially necessary *pro bono publico*," [1] or, as unlearned and ignorant men say, for the public good. By the public good Lord Lytton, as he explained at length to Lord Cranbrook, meant a proof in the form of an example that the Amir had been alienated by "the uncorrected prosecution of the Lawrence-Gladstone policy." 1878.

The supporters of that policy, including Lord Lawrence himself, conceived that Lord Lytton's own attempts to correct it had brought about the evils of which it was assigned as the cause. Lord Lytton was so much pleased with the success of his own masterful activity that he wrote to Lord Cranbrook, "Thus far I think we have made no false move in the game, and if Cavagnari succeeds in his negotiations with the Khyberis, we have taken, and the Amir will (by bad play) have lost, the first trick. The second rubber now opens, and I think we begin it with the odd trump in our hands. Ordinary diplomatic action is, of course, *exhausted*, and we must immediately adopt other measures." [2] It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than such language presents with the style of Lord Dalhousie when he was forced to contemplate the possibility of bloodshed. By this time the prospect of another Afghan war had become familiar to the British public, and Lord Lawrence addressed to the *Times* a series of weighty, temperate letters against interference with a country which only wished to be left alone. He was supported by one of the most scientific soldiers who had served in India, Sir John Adye, and by Sir Henry Havelock, who had won the Victoria Cross at Lucknow. On the other

Sept. 23.

Preparations for war.

Protest of Lord Lawrence.

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 284.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 285.

1878. hand, Lord Lytton was defended in the same journal with great ability by Sir James Stephen, who argued that precautions against Russia were necessary for the defence of India, while Lord Grey denied the right of the Indian Government to meddle with the Amir unless it could be shown that he had made an offensive alliance with Russia. Of this there was no tangible evidence, though the policy of Lord Beaconsfield had undoubtedly exasperated our principal rival in the East.

Lord Lytton restrained by the Cabinet.

After the return of Sir Neville Chamberlain, Lord Lytton began to press the Government hard. Conscious that he had the advocates of peace at a disadvantage, and believing that Lord Lawrence's school had been discredited in the person of Sir Neville Chamberlain, he urged that Shere Ali should be deposed, and his kingdom broken up. He was for immediate war.

Oct. 25. But the Cabinet insisted upon the Ultimatum of civilised diplomacy, and thus the Amir was

Nov. 5. accorded a term of grace. The Ultimatum demanded a written apology for the repulse of Sir Neville Chamberlain's mission, and a definite promise to receive a permanent British legation in Afghanistan not later than the 20th of the month. Lord Lytton had desired to make the most of Sir Neville Chamberlain's rebuff, which he hoped would satisfy the British public of the necessity for war. But Lord Beaconsfield, in his

Nov. 9. annual speech at the Guildhall, dwelt upon the

The "Scientific Frontier."

strategic aspect of the question. Loftily dismissing the criticism of his opponents as "the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity," he remarked that on Lord Mayor's Day was heard "the voice of sense and truth," as if wisdom were an accident of time and place, not an attribute of the human mind. His epigrammatic summary of the situation would have been useful to Ahab in

dealing with Naboth. The frontier was "haphazard," said the Premier, and it ought to be "scientific." "Scientific frontier" is the literal translation of a French phrase which means an artificial frontier created for want of a natural one. War is an art, not a science, and Lord Lawrence was generally supposed to have understood the art of government. While Sir John Lawrence was saving the Punjab, and indeed all India, to British rule, Mr. Disraeli was carping and cavilling in the House of Commons at the policy of Canning and Dalhousie. But Lord Beaconsfield was now, so to speak, on horseback, and refused with elaborate discourtesy to receive a deputation from Lord Lawrence on behalf of peace. He held that Lord Lytton was obliged to go to war, because Lord Lawrence and Lord Northbrook had kept the peace. Such was the voice of sense and truth. 1878. Nov. 19. The Afghan war of 1878.

No reply having been received from the Amir, operations were forthwith begun against him, and Parliament was summoned to authorise the employment of Indian revenues in conquering Afghanistan. The Indian Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Haines, directed that Afghanistan should be simultaneously invaded by three divisions under Generals Browne, Stewart, and Roberts. Sir Samuel Browne captured Ali Musjid and occupied Jellalabad. While he was advancing through the Khyber, General Roberts marched through the Kurum and skilfully took a difficult position upon the ridge of the Peiwar Khotal. General Stewart crossed the Khojak range and entered Kandahar. During the progress of the campaign the Amir's reply to the Ultimatum reached the Viceroy's hands. If the Indian Government had waited for it, war would have been almost impossible. For while it contained no Nov. 21. The Amir's reply. Nov. 30.

1878. apology, it agreed to the temporary reception of a British Envoy, and must have led to further parleying. It was now treated as too late, and the war was proceeding when Parliament met. But a few days before the opening of the session, Mr.

Dec. 5. Gladstone paid a farewell visit to Greenwich, which he had decided not to contest again, and delivered at Plumstead a powerful speech against

Mr. Gladstone's attack on the war. the Indian policy of the Government. "If Russia," he exclaimed, "sent a mission to Kabul, why have we not called Russia to account?" This is the sort of point which goes straight home to the British public, because it combines sound morality with common sense. Discarding with contempt the pretext that when war commenced, criticism should be dumb, he denounced the injustice of the attack upon the Amir, and reminded the people of England that national injustice was the surest road to national downfall. It was impossible to realise that the great orator who held that vast meeting in thrall as he quoted the words of Lady Macbeth's physician: "This disease is beyond my practice," and added, "The disease of an evil conscience is beyond the practice of all the physicians of all the countries in the world," had retired from his natural place at the head of the Liberal party.

By this time the official leaders of Liberalism had plucked up courage, and after such a speech as Mr. Gladstone's the party would not have

The winter session. tolerated any slackness in opposition. Amendments to the Ministerial Resolutions were moved in both Houses by Lord Halifax, who had been Secretary of State for India, and Mr. Whitbread, whose judicial manner added weight to a perfect Parliamentary style. Although the technical question which required the Queen's speech to be delivered in December instead of February was the draft upon the revenues of India, the real subject of

debate was the reason and alleged necessity of the war. In the House of Lords Lord Lawrence and Lord Grey stated with temperate gravity the case for a policy from which Lord Lytton was the first Governor-General to depart. Lord Northbrook pointed out that though he had been Viceroy for two years under the present Government, Lord Salisbury supported him before his resignation in his adhesion to Lord Lawrence's school. But the most powerful speech was Lord Beaconsfield's, and it recalled his best days in the House of Commons. He did not blame Russia for her preparations in Central Asia, allowing that they were a logical consequence of the strain produced by the Treaty of San Stefano. Yet it behoved this country to take her own measures against them, and he stigmatised the opponents of the war as upholders of peace at any price. "That deleterious doctrine haunts the people of this country in every form. . . . That doctrine has done more mischief than any I can well recall that have been afloat in this century. It has occasioned more wars than the most ruthless conquerors. It has disturbed and nearly destroyed that political equilibrium so necessary to the liberties of nations and the welfare of the world." Lord Halifax, who was responsible for the Crimean War, and Lord Lawrence, who sent Nicholson to Delhi, must have smiled at this fanciful description of themselves as members of the Peace Society. But a majority of more than three to one affirmed the conclusions, if it could not ratify the arguments, of Lord Beaconsfield. Six Bishops voted for the war, and one only, Mackarness of Oxford, against it, though Fraser of Manchester would have joined the minority if he had not been prevented by illness. It would have been difficult to find six Nonconformist Ministers on the same side. In the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone surpassed his

1878.

Dec. 13.

1878. speech at Plumstead, and impressed even Ministerialists by his earnest appeal to the example of "other men with other minds in happier days," such as Canning, Lawrence, and Mayo. The more powerfully Mr. Gladstone spoke, the more thoroughly he fulfilled the expectations of his hearers. The surprise of this debate was the unprecedented vigour and animation of Lord Hartington. Hitherto the Leader of the Opposition had seemed half afraid to attack the Government. On this occasion he hit out straight from the shoulder. "It is we, and we alone," he said, "who drove the Afghans into the arms of Russia. Whatever else may be done, the present Viceroy of India should be recalled. . . . We have seen him mimicking at Delhi the fallen state of the Mogul Empire. . . . At another turn we see him fidgeting about the harmless eccentricities of the Indian Press. In the papers now before the House we see him addressing the dying Envoy of a puzzled and frightened sovereign in terms which seem to be borrowed partly from a lawyer's letter and partly from a tale in the *Arabian Nights*." At length Lord Hartington had been roused to express the feelings of Liberals in the country as well as Liberals in the House, and though the Ministerial majority ran into three figures, the Opposition felt stronger than at any time since 1874. The feebleness of Sir Stafford Northcote's reply was not due to any incapacity on his part, but to disbelieve in the justice of his cause. He had always been, since he was at the India Office, a disciple of Lord Lawrence, and his proper place was below the gangway.[1] But there are honest men who do not resign, and Sir Stafford was one of them.

Lord Hartington's vigour.

Although Mr. Fawcett made a gallant effort to prevent the cost of the Afghan War from being

[1] See Lang's *Life of Sir Stafford Northcote*, p. 299.

thrown upon India, and was seconded by Mr. Gladstone, the majority for the Government rather increased than diminished. Against Mr. Whitbread's motion it was 101; against Mr. Fawcett's it was 110. Yet even at that moment, when the policy called Imperialism by its admirers, and Jingoism by its opponents, was at the height of its glory and success, Ministers met with an unexpected rebuff from their own supporters. The revolt of the Roumelian Mohammedans in the Rhodope mountains against their transference to a Christian Government had been put down with much severity by Russian soldiers in 1877. The consequent distress was represented to be grievous, and Commissioners from the Great Powers were sent to ascertain the best method of alleviating it. The British, the French, the Italian, and the Turkish Delegates reported that the Russians had been guilty of abominable crimes, such as disgraced the Turks and Circassians in Bulgaria. The German, the Austrian, and the Russian Commissioners refused to sign the Report. Excluding the Russian and the Turk as interested parties, there was a majority of three to two against Russia, and the truth of the accusations was thus left in doubt. But the friends of the Turk made the most of the Rhodope Report, and Sir Henry Layard,[1] when he sent it home, wrote an injudicious despatch, in which he taunted the Liberal party with indifference to cruelties inflicted by Christians upon Mussulmans. For this sneer there was no excuse. The question was one not of feeling but of evidence, and the British Commissioner, Consul Fawcett, was as Turkish in his leanings as Sir Henry Layard himself. The Government, however, did what they had not done for the Bulgarians,

1878.

The Rhodope grant.

[1] Mr. Layard had received the Grand Cross of the Bath on the 1st of June.

1878. and proposed a Parliamentary grant in aid of the surviving sufferers. This idea proved unacceptable even to faithful Ministerialists. Their sympathy with the Turks did not take that form, and Sir Stafford Northcote withdrew his proposal, probably with more satisfaction than he felt when he made it. His second decision, whatever may have been its motive, was wiser than his first. Russia had not Turkey's responsibility to the Powers, and it seemed clear that the four incriminating Commissioners had exceeded their instructions, even if they were right in their facts.

The depression of trade.

The time was certainly not propitious for incurring fresh liabilities. The state of trade was deplorable. Ever since the bumper year, 1874, it had been declining, and to find remunerative

Oct. 2. employment for capital was difficult. The failure of the Glasgow Bank through the fraud of the Directors seriously affected business in the west of Scotland, and to some extent in the north of England. The failure was for six millions, and the consequent panic was the greater because the shareholders had been grossly deceived. But there were far more general causes for commercial depression than the failure of any bank. A series of wars in Europe and Asia, with the excessive armaments which provoked them, or which they provoked, followed and succeeded by reckless speculation and unrestrained extravagance, had made some men unable to borrow, and others unwilling to lend. The financial gloom in which the year closed was not confined to the speculative or to the wealthier classes. While taxes had been raised, wages had been reduced, and some of those who shouted most loudly for a policy of self-assertion abroad were beginning to ask what they had gained by the Treaty of Berlin or the invasion of Afghanistan.

That invasion was, for its immediate purpose, successful. Shere Ali followed precedent, and disappeared, as Mr. Gladstone had predicted that he would. He left Kabul after the victory of General Roberts at Peiwar Khotal, accompanied by those members of the Russian mission who had remained after the departure of the Envoy in August, and it was his intention to lay his case before the Czar at Petersburg. But the Czar wanted neither him nor his case. Russia had no further use for him, and he died, a broken man, at Mazar-i-Sheriff on the 21st of February 1879. On his flight from his capital his rebellious son, Yakub Khan, was released, or released himself, from prison, and at once opened communications with the Government of India. "The primary condition of a strong, independent Afghanistan," Lord Lytton wrote to Lord Cranbrook, "is a strong, independent ruler." Such a ruler he conceived himself to have found in Yakub, with whom he thought it safe and expedient to form friendly relations. Yakub was quite ready. Five days after Shere Ali's death Major Cavagnari received from the new Amir one of those picturesque epistles in which Mohammedan potentates express or disguise their feelings. His "worthy and exalted father," who possessed at least sense enough to keep him in prison, had "obeyed the call of the Summoner, and throwing off the dress of existence, hastened to the region of the divine mercy. Since every living being must relinquish the robe of life, and must drink the draught of death," Yakub was "resigned and patient under" the "heavy calamity and misfortune" which made him a ruler instead of a captive. And as his "exalted father was an ancient friend of the illustrious British Government," he sent the intimation of his loss "out of friendship." Lord Lytton, who had treated Shere

1878.

Dec. 13. Flight and death of Shere Ali.

1879.

Jan. 10. Recognition of Yakub as Amir.

1879. Ali as hostile to England and a tool of Russia, accepted these hypocritical assurances with the credulity which so often balances scepticism in minds like his. During the negotiations which followed, Yakub showed that his ideas of frontiers were, like Naboth's and Lord Lawrence's, præscientific. He declared that to cede the territory then occupied by British forces, or any other part of Afghan soil, was "beyond the strength and capacity of the officers of this God-granted Government," as it was certainly beyond the intention of its self-appointed head.[1] To the advent of a British mission he did not demur, and even invited it to Kabul, with the hospitality of the spider to the fly.

Treaty of Gundamuk. The details of a transaction in which the new Amir was never for a moment honest or straightforward have no importance. The Treaty of Gundamuk, concluded at a spot between Jellalabad and Kabul on the 26th of May by Yakub and Cavagnari, purported to establish British superintendence over the foreign policy of Afghanistan, exercised through a British representative stationed at Kabul. In return for these concessions a guarantee against foreign attack was given to the Amir. Kandahar and Jellalabad were restored to him, nor was any direct annexation of territory required. But the control of the Khyber Pass, with the districts of Pishin, Sibi, and Kurum, was to be with the Indian Government, so that the future invasion of a "strong, friendly, and independent" country might July 7. be simplified and facilitated. "We do not," wrote Lord Lytton and his Council, with modest diffidence, "we do not profess to ascribe any talismanic virtue to written engagements on the part of Afghan Princes." But they evidently regarded the treaty as a masterpiece of far-sighted wisdom,

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, pp. 313–315.

and Lord Cranbrook, in approving of that instrument as a whole, reserved the full measure of his enthusiasm for the provision of a British Resident at Kabul. Thus the object specified by Lord Salisbury in 1876, for which Lord Lytton was to find, or, if necessary, to make, a pretext, had been at length achieved. Lord Lytton's contempt for his illustrious predecessor broke out again. "Yakub told Cavagnari [a singular chain of authority] that his father had been much misled by an impression that Lord Lawrence was omnipotent in England on Indian affairs, and would never allow us to go to war with him." But Cavagnari, a worthy agent of his brilliant chief, "improved the occasion by reading to the Amir some choice bits of Bright's speeches about the 'Barbarous Afghan.'" [1] "It will always," wrote Lord Beaconsfield to Lord Lytton, "be to me a source of real satisfaction that I had the opportunity of placing you on the throne of the Great Mogul."

1879. Aug. 7. Yakub and Cavagnari. Aug. 14.

While Ministers were priding themselves upon the brilliant results of their new policy in Asia, the attention of the public was suddenly called to Africa in a manner more emphatic than agreeable. The high commissioner for South Africa, and Governor of Cape Colony, Sir Bartle Frere, had great self-confidence and a strong will. Throughout his distinguished career in India, where he assisted Sir John Lawrence to save the Punjab during the Mutiny, and became after the Mutiny Lord Canning's confidential adviser, he had impressed his superiors, colleagues, and subordinates with the integrity of his moral character and the sincerity of his religious principles. Although he came under the influence of General Sir John Jacob, and was sometimes regarded as the founder of the "forward" school, he belonged, in matters more

The Zulu War. Sir Bartle Frere.

[1] Lytton to Cranbrook, June 23.

1879. important than frontier policy, to the type of Lord Lawrence, not of Lord Lytton. But though just, righteous, and considerate in dealing with his fellow-creatures of all races and creeds, he was prompt and decisive when he held that the time for action had come. Rather than allow the Cape Ministers, Mr. Molteno and Mr. Merriman, to conduct a native war with Colonial forces on their own authority,
Feb. 1, 1878. he dismissed them from the public service. In a Constitutional Colony this was a strong step to take. Frere, however, was convinced that to abstain in such circumstances from taking extreme measures would have been "to surrender the fundamental rights of the Crown,"[1] and he did not hesitate. In this and in all other important steps of his South African career he received sympathy and support from home so long as Lord Carnarvon held the Seals of the Colonial Office. From Lord Carnarvon's successor, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who knew no more about South Africa than the man in the moon, he got very little sympathy, and a support so qualified as to be worse than useless. With his new Minister, Mr. Sprigg,[2] he was in complete harmony. Otherwise his position was difficult and hazardous. The struggles between white and black to which South Africa had long been liable had apparently culminated in a spirit of general revolt against the white man, whether British or Dutch. The main source of disquiet was the Zulus, and their King, Cetywayo. Although the Zulus had at first been the enemies of the Dutch rather than of the British, and had been routed by the Boer farmers with great
1840. slaughter on "Dingaan's Day," there was no reason to suppose that these savages drew nice distinctions between one white people and another. Dingaan

[1] Martineau's *Life of Frere*, vol. ii. p. 210.
[2] Afterwards Sir Gordon Sprigg.

had been followed by his brother Panda, and Panda by his son Cetywayo, who established, or revived, a military system of the most formidable kind by making homicide a condition precedent of marriage. For a breach of this ordinance a number of Zulu girls were deliberately slaughtered; and when Sir Henry Bulwer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, on which Zululand abutted, remonstrated with Cetywayo, he received an answer of outrageous defiance: "I do kill. But do not consider that I have done anything yet in the way of killing. Why do the white people start at nothing? I have not yet begun; I have yet to kill; it is the custom of our nation, and I shall not depart from it." This language was transmitted by Bulwer to Lord Carnarvon before Frere's arrival in South Africa, with a warning that it preluded a combination of the native races to "wash their spears" in white men's blood. Before the annexation of the Transvaal, Cetywayo had been in some degree controlled by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who was present at his coronation, and whom he called his "father Somtsen," hoping that Shepstone would help him against the Boers. Now that the Boers were British subjects under "Somtsen's" administration, he was as likely to attack one race as the other. His cruelties in his own dominions were atrocious, and his chief victims were converts to Christianity. Lord Carnarvon, however, declined to protect either them or the missionaries;[1] and it was only when a responsible officer reported Cetywayo's proposal of an alliance with the Swazis against the white man that he ordered, just before leaving office, the defence, "at whatever sacrifice," of Natal and the Transvaal. The probable consequence to British relations with natives might have been urged as a reason against assuming the govern-

1845.
1873.
Cetywayo.
Nov. 2, 1876.
1877.
Jan. 24, 1878.

[1] Carnarvon to Bulwer, August 31, 1877.

1878. ment of the Transvaal. The one feature of that policy which commended it to any Boers was that it entitled them to British aid against Zulus. The Transvaal was now part of the Queen's dominions, and to protect it was a fundamental duty of the High Commissioner. Unfortunately there was at this time a dispute between Boers and Zulus about a strip of border territory on which the Boers had built farmhouses. A Commission appointed by Sir Henry Bulwer, consisting of a lawyer, a civilian, and an officer of Engineers, gave an opinion in favour of the Zulus, which was submitted to Sir Bartle Frere for his final judgment in the matter. He considered the award unfair, both because written evidence was on the side of the Boers, and because they had built on the land seventy-five farms, containing about six thousand acres apiece. He did not, however, alter in any way the finding of the Commissioners, although he submitted it to Shepstone and to the Secretary of State, who acquiesced in it with much regret, as encouraging Cetywayo to war. Shepstone, who knew the Zulus well, and had certainly no prejudice either against them or in favour of the Boers, highly disapproved both of its substance and of its terms. Sir Bartle Frere endeavoured to meet all difficulties by issuing the Award intact, and accompanying it with a proviso that as sovereignty did not change private ownership, the Boers must either be compensated for the loss of their farms, or protected in the enjoyment of them.

Boers and Zulus.

Feb.

Dec.

By this time, however, other and more serious questions had arisen. In July a number of armed Zulus crossed the frontier of Natal and carried off two native women, whom they murdered. For this heinous crime Cetywayo offered the contemptuous satisfaction of fifty pounds. He was evidently on the war-path. Whether he raided Natal or the

Transvaal, British subjects would be alike the sufferers, and were equally entitled to the protection of Her Majesty's Government. The white population of South Africa were in imminent danger, and Frere applied for reinforcements to the Government at home. Writing to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from Pietermaritzburg, he described the situation in plain language. "The Zulus," he said, "are now quite out of hand, and the maintenance of peace depends on their forbearance. . . . The peace of South Africa for many years to come seems to me to depend on your taking steps to put a final end to Zulu pretensions to dictate to Her Majesty's Government what they may or may not do to protect Her Majesty's Colonies in South Africa." Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, in reply, wrote to Sir Bartle Frere, who was responsible for the peace of South Africa, "Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to comply with a request for a reinforcement of troops. All the information that has hitherto reached them with respect to the position of affairs in Zululand appears to them to justify a confident hope that by the exercise of prudence and by meeting the Zulus in a spirit of forbearance and reasonable compromise it will be possible to avert the very serious evil of a war with Cetywayo." Disappointed but not dismayed, knowing the risk and yet feeling the responsibility imperative, with the bitter consciousness that he had not the approval of the Colonial Secretary, Frere launched his Ultimatum. Together with the Award, Cetywayo received through his envoys at Tugela Drift the proposals which Sir Bartle Frere considered urgent and essential for the safety of Natal and the Transvaal. The military system of Zululand was to be broken up. Marriage was to be freely permitted without preliminary "spear-washing"; a

1878.

Sept. 30.

Frere's Ultimatum.

Oct. 17.

Refusal of reinforcements.

Dec. 11.

1878. British Resident was to be received; and missionaries were not to be molested. These were stringent terms, which could only be justified by the fact that both Natal and the Transvaal were in grave and imminent peril. Frere believed that they were; and his opinion was shared by Sir Henry Bulwer, who often disagreed with him, as well as by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the "Africander Talleyrand," who knew more about the Zulus than any other white man in the Queen's Dominions.

Bishop Colenso. The principal champion of the Zulus in South Africa was Bishop Colenso. Colenso's zeal for native rights was honourable to his sacred calling. But he judged the trained, drilled, and warlike Zulus whose services Cetywayo could command from the tame, friendly Zulus of his own diocese, who wheeled children about in perambulators and would not hurt a fly. He had not many political followers, and Sir Bartle Frere's most serious difficulties arose from quite other sources. He could not reckon upon thoroughgoing support from the Government of Natal, from the Boers of the Transvaal, or from the Cabinet of the Queen. Natal was not then a Constitutional Colony, and the official class resented the interference of the High Commissioner. Although many Boers agreed to serve under Colonel Wood[1] and Colonel Buller,[2] the bulk of them were dissatisfied with annexation, indignant with the Award, and disposed to look on while the British fought the Zulus.

Frere's isolation.

Frere believed war to be inevitable. He did not share Bishop Colenso's opinion that Cetywayo would listen to reason and give way. He was right, and Colenso was wrong. No reply had been received when the thirty days of grace expired, and on the 10th of January 1879 British

[1] Afterwards General Sir Evelyn Wood.
[2] Afterwards General Sir Redvers Buller.

troops entered Zululand. At this point Frere's responsibility ended. Military operations were the business of General Thesiger, who had succeeded his father as Lord Chelmsford in October 1878. Lord Chelmsford had not been long in South Africa, but everything possible was done to acquaint him with Zulu methods of warfare. Through his Dutch interpreter and private secretary[1] Sir Bartle Frere procured an interview between the General and two of the leading Boers, accustomed to Boer tactics, Kruger and Joubert. Kruger impressed upon Lord Chelmsford "the absolute necessity of laagering his waggons every evening, and always at the approach of the enemy. He also urged the necessity of scouting at considerable distances, as the movements of the Zulus were very rapid."[2] But it was all to no purpose. Lord Chelmsford had his own opinions about the art of war, and he made the fatal mistake of despising his enemy. To remain on the defensive was impossible. There were not enough men to protect a frontier of two hundred miles. The General divided his army, which had been increased by tardy reinforcements from home, into columns, which were to enter Zululand separately and converge upon Ulundi, near the King's Kraal. He himself with the third column, Colonel Glyn's, crossed the river Buffalo at Rorke's Drift, and encamped at Isandhlana. On the morning of the 22nd he moved out with Colonel Glyn and repulsed a body of Zulus, whom he erroneously believed to be the main force, leaving Colonel Pulleine in charge of the camp. The waggons at Isandhlana were not laagered or drawn up in a ring, and instead of proper scouting, Colonel Durnford, who had come up from Rorke's Drift to strengthen Pulleine, was sent with a few

1878.

Nov. 29.

1879. Jan. 9.

Isandhlana.

[1] The Reverend George Stegmann.
[2] Martineau's *Life of Sir Bartle Frere*, vol. ii. p. 269.

1879. men to reconnoitre. They came suddenly upon the Zulu army, twenty thousand strong, who, being thus molested, swooped upon Isandhlana, and utterly destroyed the British force of eight hundred, including Colonel Durnford and Colonel Pulleine.[1] Lord Chelmsford was compelled to retreat, having lost his tents, ammunition, and stores. If Rorke's Drift had been taken, the Zulus would have invaded Natal, with consequences best left to the imagination. But two young lieutenants, Chard and Bromhead, earned the Victoria Cross by their splendidly heroic defence of this position against several thousand Zulus. They had eighty men with them, and a barricade of bags and biscuit tins. Six times the enemy got behind this rudimentary fortification, and six times they were driven out at the point of the bayonet. When at last they retired at break of day, after an attack which had not ceased throughout the night, they left behind them a number of dead far in excess of those who had repulsed them. This brilliant feat, and the victory of Colonel Pearson with the first column at Etchowe, were something to set against the grievous disaster of Isandhlana. Then indeed was realised the true extent of the peril which Frere anticipated from Cetywayo's homicidal machine. There was such a panic in Natal as he had not seen in India at the time of the Mutiny. But the Government of Mr. Sprigg sent up reinforcements from Cape Town, the Zulus in Natal remained quiet, and the Colony, demoralised as it was, escaped the dreaded invasion.

Rorke's Drift.

The news of Isandhlana.

In 1879 telegraphic communication with the Cape stopped at Madeira, and it was not till the 11th of February that the news of Isandhlana

[1] It is a tragic coincidence that Colonel Durnford, who thus perished, had turned by his vote the Arbitrator's Award in favour of the Zulus.

arrived in England. Under the shadow of this ominous calamity Ministers met Parliament again, and had to say something without knowing what to say. They praised the gallantry of the troops. They expressed no sort of confidence in Sir Bartle Frere. Apparently they felt none. Yet it was not till the middle of March that they could make up their minds, and then Sir Michael Hicks-Beach wrote a despatch which does not redound to the credit of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration. The Cabinet had the choice of two honest, intelligible courses, and they chose neither. They might have condemned Sir Bartle's policy and recalled him. They might have adopted it and stood by him. They endeavoured to avoid unpopularity at home by censuring the High Commissioner, and to escape difficulty in South Africa by leaving him at his post. "Her Majesty's Government," wrote Sir Michael, "have been unable to find in the documents you have placed before them that evidence of urgent necessity for immediate action which alone could justify you in taking, without their full knowledge and sanction, a course almost certain to result in a war which, as I had previously impressed upon you, every effort should have been used to avoid." This was a severe reproof, but instead of following verdict by sentence, and recalling a Governor they could no longer trust, the Cabinet begged Sir Bartle Frere to stay where he was and help them over the stile. In official language they "had no desire to withdraw the confidence hitherto reposed in him, the continuance of which was now more than ever needed to conduct their difficulties in South Africa to a successful termination." The Opposition had an overwhelming case against the Government. They threw it away. They attacked the man who had saved Natal, the man whom they should have

1879.

Censure of Sir Bartle Frere.

Blunder of the Opposition.

1879. defended against his ungenerous employers. Sir Bartle Frere had made no secret of his South African policy. He did not believe that Federation, which he was sent out to promote, would be possible until the white inhabitants, British and Dutch, had been secured from native raids. He detested the method of supporting Kaffirs against Boers which had been followed before the annexation of the Transvaal, and he perceived that once the Transvaal had been annexed, though not by him, it must be protected with as much zeal and care as Natal or Cape Colony. He had pressed these considerations upon the Colonial Office for more than a year, and no hint of disapproval had been given him until he asked for reinforcements. These had been refused in October, though the demand for them was supported by Lord Chelmsford. The consequent lack of cavalry was fatal at Isandhlana. As if all this had not been enough, the Government had sent a despatch, at once wise after the event, cringing, and censorious, which would in itself have justified a hostile vote from the House of Commons. But the Liberal Leaders did not understand the situation any better than the Cabinet. Through Lord Lansdowne and Sir Charles Dilke they moved in both Houses a resolution of censure on Sir Bartle Frere for making war, and upon the Government for not recalling him. The conduct of Ministers was indefensible and entirely within the knowledge of the Opposition. The temper of the Zulus, exasperated by long and enforced abstinence from bloodshed, was not realised by any one at home. To attack Sir Bartle Frere was a piece of gratuitous unwisdom, condemned alike by constitutional principle and by common sense. By this manœuvre the Liberal Leaders volunteered to share with Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues responsibility

for treating a great public servant as a great public criminal, and at the same time expressly relieved Ministers from all complicity in the Zulu War,[1] for which they, and not Sir Bartle Frere, were responsible to the House of Commons. Liberals violated one of their first principles by bringing the subject before the House of Lords at all. The Lords, according to them, have no control over the executive, and the withdrawal of their confidence from a Government has no effect whatever. Nor can it be said that the deliberations of that august assembly produced in this case any great amount of senatorial wisdom. Lord Lansdowne and Lord Cranbrook agreed in restricting a Governor's powers within limits which would have prevented the creation, and would bring about the destruction, of the British Empire. Lord Salisbury enunciated the solemn platitude, fit to adorn a copy-book, that "Her Majesty's advisers, and they only, must decide the grave issues of peace and war," forgetting the true nature of Sir Bartle Frere's defence, which was that the fate of Pretoria and Pietermaritzburg had become a question of days. In the House of Lords the Opposition obtained the unaccustomed support of the old Duke of Somerset, who had scarcely ever voted with the Liberal party since he ceased to be a Liberal Minister, and of Lord Blachford, who represented, like Sir Henry Holland in the other House, the view of the Colonial Office that Colonial Governors should do as they were 1879.

[1] The words of the proposed Resolution were as follows: That this House, while willing to support Her Majesty's Government in all necessary measures for defending the possessions of Her Majesty in South Africa, regrets that an ultimatum which was calculated to produce immediate war should have been presented to the Zulu King without authority from the responsible advisers of the Crown, and that an offensive war should have been commenced without imperative and pressing necessity or adequate preparation; and the House regrets that after the censure passed upon the High Commissioner by Her Majesty's Government in the despatch of March 19, 1879, the conduct of affairs in South Africa should be retained in his hands.

1879.

Frere and the Government. March 31.

told. In the House of Commons, where the Ministerial majority fell to 60, they elicited from Sir Michael Hicks-Beach a defence of Sir Bartle Frere less complete than Lord Carnarvon's in another place, and from Sir Stafford Northcote a reluctant acceptance of responsibility for the Zulu War. The debate is not edifying, and Sir Bartle Frere had more reason to complain of his false friends than of his open foes. The Aborigines' Protection Society, who regarded him as a very wicked man, were free from the complicity of the Cabinet, who considered him a highly inconvenient person.

Tolerated in the light of a necessary evil by those who should have defended him to the utmost so long as he represented the Crown, Sir Bartle Frere set the Government an example by doing his duty. Having provided for the safety of

April 17.

Natal, he visited the Transvaal, and met at Pretoria

Frere and the Boers.

a number of influential Boers. This Committee, of whom Kruger and Joubert were the chiefs, protested against annexation, and demanded their independence. In vain did Frere tell them that the step was irretraceable and confront them with the accomplished fact. It is quite possible that if they had been reasonably and quietly governed by a man whom they liked and respected, such as Frere himself, they would have acquiesced in a system of Colonial autonomy. But such a constitution was not given them, and Shepstone, with all his undoubted ability, they neither respected nor liked. He had often taken the side of the Zulus against them, and they accused him of deceiving Lord Carnarvon by the assertion that they wished to be annexed. However that may have been, the attitude of their Committee on this occasion was unmistakable, and Frere reported it to the Colonial Secretary with perfect candour. The Chairman, Pretorius, and his colleagues desired that their

independence might be freely and unreservedly restored to them. They asked for nothing more. They would be content with nothing less. The Sand River Convention of 1852 was their charter, and in asking that it should be restored they claimed to speak for a very large majority of the Transvaal Boers. Frere, however, refused to believe them on this point, and persisted in thinking without sufficient evidence that the objection to British rule came from a tyrannical minority. Yet the Boers were impressed with his fair dealing, and understood him better than he understood them. Unhappily Sir Owen Lanyon, who succeeded Sir Theophilus Shepstone, was a narrow-minded martinet, with none of Shepstone's merits, and all his defects. "The vital want in the condition of affairs then existing in the Transvaal was, in one word, sympathy."[1] The Boers were heavily taxed, badly governed, and taunted with spouting sedition while unable or unwilling to take the field. Whether the policy of annexation was right or wrong, it was not given a fair chance of success; for the representative institutions which had been promised were withheld, and the Boers felt that they had gained nothing in the way of good government by the loss of their independence.

1879.

Sir Owen Lanyon.

Scarcely had the Boer Conference at Pretoria broken up when it was announced in South Africa by telegraph that the High Commissioner had been censured by the Secretary of State. On receiving, three weeks later, the actual despatch, Sir Bartle Frere wrote to Mr. Herbert,[2] Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, "I can quite understand its being necessary to write such despatches for Parliamentary purposes. How they can be expected to do anything but trip up and fetter an officer placed

Ministerial censure of Frere. April 18.

[1] Butler's *Life of Colley*, p. 252.
[2] Afterwards Sir Robert Herbert.

1879. as I am is to me inexplicable."[1] Frere is, perhaps naturally, unjust to Parliament, where cowardice never pays. Lord Elcho and Mr. Evelyn Ashley did themselves honour by defending him from opposite sides of the House. The Government would have been more respected and not more unpopular if they had stood manfully by him from the first. In South Africa he had the support of public opinion, which he lacked at home. It was not indeed unanimous. Sir Henry Bulwer disagreed with Frere's apprehension of danger from the Zulus. Bishop Merriman of Grahamstown went on this subject with Bishop Colenso, whom on ecclesiastical and theological grounds he renounced as a traitor and a heretic. But the Prime Minister and Legislature of Cape Colony, both before and after a General Election, were on the High Commissioner's side. Nor was it forgotten that this reckless fomentor of native wars, as prejudice stigmatised him at home, had dismissed the Ministry of Mr. Molteno for attacking natives without an adequate cause, and shooting prisoners without even a drum-head Court-Martial. Meanwhile the military situation had begun slowly to improve. Colonel Wood drove back large forces of Zulus with great loss at the end of March from Gingihlovo and Kambula.[2] In the middle of April reinforcements arrived from England. But Lord Chelmsford, having been unduly rash, had now become excessively cautious, and the summer was well advanced before he began to retrieve his position. Before he had gone far an unhappy accident cast a gloom upon the campaign. The son of Louis Napoleon, called by his friends the Prince Imperial, who had been a cadet at Wool-

Public opinion at the Cape.

Death of the "Prince Imperial."

[1] Martineau's *Life of Frere*, ii. 325.

[2] At Gingihlovo the gallant Boer Captain, Piet Uys, was killed fighting on the British side.

wich, and afterwards on the General's Staff at Aldershot, was allowed to join the British troops in South Africa and to see war again. On a reconnoitring party he was surprised by Zulus and despatched with assegais. Although the officer responsible was dismissed the service by a Court-Martial, the sentence was quashed by the Commander-in-Chief. But the circumstances were unfortunate, and the fact that the Prince was the only victim did not make them any better. By the end of May the Government had resolved upon a course which they should have adopted in February. They sent out Sir Garnet Wolseley to supersede Lord Chelmsford. Not satisfied with this military measure, of which no one could disapprove, they also directed that Sir Garnet should exercise supreme authority in Natal and the Transvaal. This partial deposition of Sir Bartle Frere, who was not to blame for Isandhlana, nor for the disagreement of Lord Chelmsford with Sir Henry Bulwer, was bad for South Africa, and quite inconsistent with the centralising policy of Lord Carnarvon. The cause of Federation was unlikely to be served by weakening and discrediting its most zealous champion. Even the change in the command, which was really justifiable, came too late. After Sir Garnet Wolseley had arrived in South Africa, but before he could assume control of Her Majesty's forces, Lord Chelmsford defeated the Zulu army near Ulundi, and the war was at an end. Having thus cleared his reputation, Lord Chelmsford came home to receive from the Queen the Grand Cross of the Bath, and his successor followed up the victory by the capture of Cetywayo, who was sent as a state prisoner to Cape Town. It was left for Sir Garnet Wolseley, though too late for the campaign, to arrange a settlement of Zululand. He was disappointed, and he was in a hurry.

1879.

June 1.

Despatch of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

Partial supersession of Frere.

June 28.

Battle of Ulundi. July 4.

End of the Zulu War.

Capture of Cetywayo. Aug. 28.

1879. Without consulting Sir Bartle Frere, he divided the country into thirteen districts, each with a separate chief. The largest district was assigned to John Dunn, a renegade Englishman, who, after adopting Zulu customs, including a plurality of wives, turned against Cetywayo, and fought under the British flag. Sir Garnet Wolseley accompanied this patchwork with an emphatic assurance that the Transvaal would never cease to be British. Confederation, which, in Sir Garnet's opinion, would "calm the sullen anger of these Dutchmen," [1] was once more indefinitely postponed by an attempt on Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's part to force it upon the Cape Parliament and Ministry. Both the Government of Mr. Sprigg and their supporters were Federalists. But they wanted to federate at their own time and in their own way. Rather than take Federation from Downing Street they would go without it altogether.

Settlement of Zululand.

July 6.

The legislation carried by the Government during the Afghan and Zulu campaigns was not discreditable to their character as men of business. Irish obstruction, which Sir Stafford Northcote failed to diminish by tinkering with the rules of the House, found a convenient field of exercise in the Army Regulation Bill, which Colonel Stanley substituted for the familiar Mutiny Bills of the past. As the Bill was a comprehensive measure and incorporated the articles of war, there was ample and obvious opportunity for varied and miscellaneous discussion. But on one point at least the Irishmen who aimed at preventing the despatch of business were joined by the Radicals, who had a more definite object in view. Against flogging in the army, now restricted to time of war, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Otway [2] were as em-

Irish obstruction.

[1] Martineau's *Life of Frere*, ii. 345.
[2] See vol. iii. p. 97.

phatic as Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar. The front Bench was less strenuous, and Mr. Chamberlain referred to Lord Hartington as "lately the Leader of the Opposition." Lord Hartington, though defended by Mr. Fawcett, so far yielded to Radical pressure that he finally moved himself the abolition of corporal punishment in the army. But he was defeated by a very large majority, and the Bill became law before the close of the summer. So, too, did a University Bill for Ireland, produced under pressure from Irish Members, but utterly futile as a piece of practical legislation, for the University which it set up was as purely secular as the University of London, and the Roman Catholic Church would have nothing to do with it. Places of honour and emolument were already open to them at Trinity College, but, with few exceptions, the Irish Catholics refused to compete for them, holding that education not controlled by their own Church was worse than none at all. A University without colleges and without religion was, from the Irish point of view, doubly disqualified for the purposes of that higher culture which was one of Ireland's greatest needs. Before this Bill was introduced, rather late in the session, by the Lord Chancellor,[1] Isaac Butt had passed away in his sixty-eighth year. His career, though brilliant and conspicuous, was a practical failure, for his party broke away from him, as it had broken away from an infinitely greater man, Daniel O'Connell.[2] He was succeeded in the nominal leadership of the Home Rulers by Mr. William Shaw, an apparently prosperous merchant of much natural shrewdness and humour. But Mr. Parnell was already the real chief, and he occupied himself rather with obstructing than promoting legislation. Mr. Lowther, on the

1879.

Chamberlain and Hartington.

July 7.

July 17.

Irish University Bill.

June 30.

May 5. Death of Isaac Butt.

Mr. Shaw.

[1] Lord Cairns.

[2] Vol. i. p. 65.

1879. other hand, the Chief Secretary, though a Tory of the most uncompromising type, to whom Irish aspirations were either inexplicable or abominable, did his duty as he understood it without fear or favour, and besides the University Act, carried a more useful Bill, which provided pensions for national teachers to the amount of a million and a quarter sterling, from the surplus of the Irish Church. A Bill which would have allowed Irishmen to form bodies of drilled and armed volunteers like Englishmen and Scotsmen was passed by the House of Commons and rejected by the House of Lords. But the eloquence of Mr. Cowen procured the repeal of Lord Clare's Convention Act, passed in the dark days of 1793, and an Irish National Convention was forthwith organised in Dublin by Mr. Parnell. The only other important measure which a private Member succeeded this year in passing was Dr. Cameron's[1] Habitual Drunkards' Bill, under which a man who could not control himself might go into a retreat or "home," and be there detained for a period not exceeding twelve months. The great expense of such institutions prevented this experiment in personal reform from achieving the success which it might otherwise have obtained. As for the Government, whose list of legislative failures for this year is unexampled,[2] they were rather sensible than ambitious in the proposals they carried. The substitution of two Judges for one in the trial of Election Petitions tended towards an undesirable impunity for practices really though not ostensibly corrupt, for unless the Judges are agreed the sitting Member retains his seat. On the other hand, the appointment of a Queen's

Irish teachers and their pensions.

Irish Volunteers.

Aug. 7.

Irish conventions.

Habitual Drunkards' Act.

Public Prosecutions

[1] Afterwards Sir Charles Cameron.

[2] See Clayden's *England under Lord Beaconsfield*, pp. 358–360. This book, written for a party purpose, and belonging to what in America they call campaign literature, is an unusually fair specimen of its class.

Counsel[1] as Director of Public Prosecutions made bribery more dangerous, that being one of the offences with which private persons were unlikely to meddle. To make the punishment of crime the exclusive business of the State, as it is in Scotland and in most foreign countries, was an innovation which could not be expected from a Conservative, and has not been adventured by a Liberal Ministry. The Director of Public Prosecutions is subject to the Attorney-General, and only interferes to prevent a miscarriage of justice. The Public Prosecutions Bill was not opposed. The Public Works Loan Bill was fought with determination, chiefly by Mr. Chamberlain, to the end. The Bill was designed to protect the Treasury against applications for loans from local authorities. It could not be denied that the money was borrowed for good purposes, such as the provision of elementary schools and the improvement of houses and drains. Nor did the Treasury fail to protect itself by charging a higher rate of interest than it paid. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer was alarmed at the rapid growth of these advances, estimated at more than twenty millions in ten years, and he proposed various checks upon municipal extravagance. Here, however, he came into collision with the leaders of municipal enterprise, ably represented by Mr. Chamberlain, and all he could get, after a stiff Parliamentary fight, was the limitation of annual borrowing by a single authority to a hundred thousand pounds. He was more successful with a measure directly suggested by the failure of the Glasgow Bank. The effect of this national calamity was enhanced by a decision of the House of Lords, affirming the Court of Session in Scotland, that a trustee in whose name shares had been registered was liable to the last penny of his own

1879. Public Loans Act. April 7.

[1] Mr. Maule.

1879. fortune, though he derived no personal benefit from the investment. For these unfortunate trustees

Limited Liability Act. nothing could be done. But Sir Stafford Northcote induced Parliament to amend the law by enabling an unlimited company, such as a bank,

Summary Jurisdiction Act. to register itself afresh as a limited concern. Mr. Secretary Cross, the most useful member of the Government, carried, with the aid of a Select Committee, a Summary Jurisdiction Bill, which discouraged the manufacture of martyrs by providing that refusal to pay a rate recoverable at petty sessions by summary process should not involve imprisonment unless an attempt to obtain the money through distraint had failed for want of means.

April 3. The Budget of 1879, though in itself tame and even humdrum, provoked the hostile criticism of financial purists. Taxation was not substantially increased. Sir Stafford Northcote claimed that his figures showed a surplus of two millions, with which he should be able to defray the expenses of the Zulu War. To oppose this Budget directly was impracticable, and the attack took the form of Resolutions against the extravagance of Conservative finance. The Government had a majority of

April 28.

Expenditure and retrenchment. 73, and even Mr. Gladstone could not induce the public to take much interest in the question. Sir Stafford Northcote, a much warier and a much less simple man than he seemed, inquired why he should be blamed for not putting on more taxes. For a nation to live upon its capital is a dangerous process, which cannot last. But it is always popular for the moment, as Sir Stafford very well knew. Before the end of the session the estimate for the Zulu War had gone up to four millions and a half, which necessitated another loan. Borrowing from day to day may be politics; it is not finance. One reason given by Sir Stafford Northcote for leaving

things as they were, with the Income Tax at only fivepence in the pound, was the general depression of trade. That depression had, for the first time since the repeal of the Corn Laws, extended to agriculture, always the most vocal and articulate interest of the United Kingdom. When a peer proposed reciprocity, which is one side of retaliation, as a remedy, Lord Beaconsfield laughed him and his policy to scorn. But as a result of debates in both Houses the Government appointed a Royal Commission, with a Cabinet Minister, the Duke of Richmond, in the chair, to investigate the condition of farms, farmers, and labourers, the law and practice of agricultural tenure, the importation of agricultural produce, and the state of agricultural knowledge. The Commission divided Great Britain into districts, taking Ireland as a whole, and appointed Assistant Commissioners to make a separate Report for each. Although the Government were taunted with evading the question and shirking responsibility, it is difficult to see what other step they could have taken for ascertaining the facts of a case bristling with disputes.

1879.

Agricultural depression.

April 29.

Aug. 15. Royal Commission.

Neither bad harvests nor low prices, which were cited as the joint causes of agricultural depression, could be attributed to the neglect or default of Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues. The financial crisis in Egypt, on the other hand, and the revolution to which it led, would have been avoided if British interests had been adequately represented at the Congress of Berlin. Early in 1879 the Khedive dismissed his too independent Minister, Nubar Pasha, and announced that he should himself preside at meetings of his Cabinet. To this intention England and France objected, and it was not pressed. But in getting rid of Nubar, Ismail really intended to free himself from the control of Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières, who

Feb. 20.

1879. April 8. between them protected the English and French bondholders. Their removal followed Nubar's, and a native Ministry under Cherif Pasha was then formed. But Ismail had gone too far. He might oppress the Egyptians as much as he liked. When he tried his hand upon his foreign creditors, who deserved neither help nor sympathy, his sixteen years of corruption and misgovernment came to a sudden end. The most practical statesman in Europe, who would gladly have helped England to occupy Egypt if Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury had had a little more pluck, suggested that the best course under present conditions would be the deposition of Ismail in favour of his son. The Sultan's obligations to Europe were measured by the difference between the Treaty of San Stefano and the Treaty of Berlin. He submitted at once to the will of the Powers, who all adopted Prince Bismarck's policy, and Ismail was deposed. Tewfik Pasha, though not an able, was an honest man, and therefore a complete contrast to his father. He chose an honest, though not an able, Minister in Riaz Pasha. M. de Blignières resumed his functions with increased powers, and his new English colleague in place of Mr. Wilson was Major Baring,[1] who very soon showed himself the first man in Egypt, let who would be the second. But the weakness and incapacity of the Government had fatally undermined the British position. What might have been had without the asking in 1878 was unattainable without a European war in 1879.

Deposition of the Khedive.

June 26.

Death of Lord Lawrence. June 27.

The greatest of Anglo-Indians since the death of Lord Dalhousie died in his sixty-ninth year during the inclement summer of 1879. John Lawrence's most splendid services to India and to England were rendered between the conquest

[1] Afterwards Earl of Cromer.

of the Punjab and the suppression of the Mutiny. 1879.
His Viceroyalty was uneventful, and after his return home in 1868 he presided with tranquil dignity over the first School Board for London. The Peerage conferred upon him in 1869, on Mr. Gladstone's recommendation, and by the Duke of Argyll's request as Secretary for India, was felt to be a tardy acknowledgment of merits which no official honours could enhance. He would have gone down to his grave at peace with all men if the sudden reversal of his Indian policy by Lord Lytton had not provoked him to unwelcome controversy in the House of Lords and in the Press. His remonstrances against the invasion of Afghanistan were treated by Lord Beaconsfield with a scornful insolence which he was too great a man, and too good a Christian, to resent. When he heard that by the treaty of Gundamuk a British mission was to be established at Kabul, he mournfully exclaimed, "They will all be murdered, every one of them." [1] He did not live to see the fulfilment of his gloomy forebodings.

Lord Lytton and the Government.

At the time of his death the Cabinet and their agent in governing India from Downing Street were employed in the exchange of mutual felicitations upon the brilliant triumph of their Afghan policy. Lord Salisbury, though no longer Secretary for India, was unable to contain himself. "I cannot allow the conclusion of this affair to pass," he wrote May 23.
to Lord Lytton, "without warmly congratulating you on the great success you have achieved, and the brilliant qualities you have displayed." [2] To his immediate superior the Viceroy wrote, "My dear June 28.
Lord Cranbrook — A thousand thanks for your letter of May 27. Major Cavagnari is now with me; and from all I learn from him and other

[1] Bosworth Smith's *Life of Lord Lawrence*, vol. ii. p. 649.
[2] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 330.

1879. sources of information, I think you need be under no anxiety about the satisfactory execution and results of the Kabul Treaty, or any troubles in Afghanistan consequent on the withdrawal of our troops." [1] The customary sneers at Lord Lawrence followed in due course.[2] When in the House of Commons at the close of the session Mr. Grant Duff criticised the Treaty of Gundamuk, the Under-Secretary for India, Mr. Edward Stanhope, expressed his surprise at such unreasonable obstinacy, and his exultation over the ease which had attended the instalment of an Embassy at Kabul. "We have secured a scientific and adequate frontier," wrote Lord Beaconsfield, "for our Indian Empire." [3] On the 24th of July Major Cavagnari, now Sir Louis Cavagnari, K.C.B., entered Kabul with two secretaries and a doctor, escorted by twenty-five cavalry and fifty men of the Guide Corps. The native Minister attached to the Mission, Bukhtiar Khan, died three days before, poisoned, as is now generally believed, by the Amir. The blind confidence of Lord Lytton and his advisers in Yakub Khan is as remarkable as their morbid suspicion of Shere Ali. Shere Ali was weak and timid. Yakub was crafty and treacherous. He suggested Kabul because it was most convenient for his own purposes. When he had got the Mission safely there, he let his subjects clearly understand that the presence of these Christians in the heart of a Mohammedan country was an abomination to the faithful. "I have been quite bewildered," wrote Cavagnari, "with the stories that have been brought me hinting that no trust should be placed in Yakub Khan." [4] Cavagnari was bewildered because he had got hold of a false clue. What he suspected was Russian

The Embassy at Kabul.

Aug. 14.

Aug. 30.

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 333.
[2] *Id.* p. 335.
[3] *Id.* p. 331.
[4] *Id.* p. 349.

intrigue, and of that he could find no evidence, 1879.
because it did not exist. Russia had left him to Murder of Cavagnari.
the Afghans, who murdered him on the 3rd of
September. With him perished the whole Mission.
There was not one of them left. It appears that
even those on the spot who approved of Lord
Lytton's proceedings did not share the false security
of Government House. General Roberts[1] dis-
believed in the honesty of Yakub, which he certainly
had good reason to doubt,[2] and in the safety of
Cavagnari. He thought that Kabul should have
been occupied by British troops before the negotia-
tions at Gundamuk. Whatever may have been
the mistakes in detail of civil or military authority,
the whole fabric of Lord Lytton's Afghan policy
had fallen like a house of cards. The scientific
frontier was a phrase and an after-thought. The
essence of Lord Salisbury's instructions to Lord
Lytton in 1876 was the maintenance of a permanent
Envoy at Kabul. To say, as Mr. Grant Duff said Sept. 11.
among his constituents at Elgin, "The blood that
has been shed has been as much shed by Lord
Salisbury as if he had slain with his own hand the
unhappy men who have been massacred," is to use
the language of heated partisanship. Lord Salis-
bury did not believe in the danger, and no more,
for that matter, did Sir Louis Cavagnari. But the
Government had chosen to neglect the lessons of
experience and the teaching of the wise. Lord
Salisbury had forgotten the "large maps" which
he advised other people to use, and Lord Beacons-
field, in his dreams of the "Great Mogul," had
ignored the realities of Afghan life. If Russia set a
trap for him, he had walked into it, with his Viceroy
before him and his Cabinet behind him. The
"strong, friendly, and independent Afghanistan"

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, vol. ii. p. 177.
[2] See p. 170.

1879. had become a seething mass of hostility and turbulence. "The web of policy so carefully and patiently woven," wrote Lord Lytton to Lord Beaconsfield, "has been rudely shattered." The shattering of the web was more obvious than the care and patience of the weaver. But in any case the crime had to be punished. General Sir Donald Stewart at once reoccupied Kandahar, and General Sir Frederick Roberts marched upon Kabul through

Oct. 12. Roberts's occupation of Kabul. the Kurum Valley. He reached Kabul in little more than a month after severely defeating the Afghans at Kharasiab, and received, not altogether willingly, the abdication of the Amir. Yakub had undoubtedly connived at the massacre, and in deporting him to British India the Government chose the merciful alternative. But the Committee appointed by the Viceroy to inquire into the matter found that he did not instigate the attack upon the Mission, though he did nothing to prevent it, and there was, for the moment, no one to put in his place. A military tribunal constituted by Sir Frederick Roberts sat till the end of November, and condemned eighty-seven perpetrators of the massacre, who were executed accordingly.

Disintegration of Afghanistan. As for the future, Lord Lytton reverted to his old policy, the disintegration of Afghanistan, and suggested that England should keep Kandahar, giving to Persia Seistan and Herat. "Afghanistan,"

Oct. 12. said Lord Cranbrook, an easy convert, "Afghanistan, as a whole, can no longer exist." [1] Threatened countries, like threatened men, live long. To propose the partition of Afghanistan was simple enough. To parcel it out in detail was more complicated. For instance, Western Afghanistan, with Kandahar, might become a tributary State under a native Governor. But who was to rule the rest of the old kingdom? The project of

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 381.

transferring Herat to Persia fell through; and, 1879.
while schemes of tribal arrangement were being discussed, the tribes of Kohistan compelled Sir Frederick Roberts to evacuate Kabul and fortify Dec. 11.
himself in Sherpur. Their success, however, was brief. An attack which they rashly made upon Sherpur was repulsed with heavy loss, and before Dec. 22.
Christmas the British General was again master of Kabul. Sir Frederick Roberts was not entrusted with the political negotiations which necessarily preceded his retirement from the Afghan capital. For this purpose the Viceroy's representative was Mr. Griffin,[1] who had been Secretary to the Govern- 1880.
ment of the Punjab. Mr. Griffin's instructions Feb. 16.
were that Yakub Khan could not be restored; that Western must be severed from North-western Afghanistan, which was not to be annexed; and that any other ruler than Yakub whom the Afghans chose to adopt would be recognised by the Paramount Power. "The sole object," wrote Feb. 18.
Lord Lytton to Lord Cranbrook, "of all the military operations I have sanctioned for this spring is to facilitate the early evacuation of the country."[2] This amounts to a complete abandonment of Lord Salisbury's policy, and his own, which would have converted Afghanistan into a Protected State, with a British Resident at Kabul. But it was impossible to leave Afghanistan without a government, or to abandon the Sirdar, Sher Ali, a cousin and namesake of the late Amir, who administered Kandahar under the protection of British bayonets.

The sudden appearance at Balkh on the Oxus Abdur Rahman.
of Abdur Rahman, Dost Mohammed's grandson, seemed to provide a solution of the first problem in the nick of time. Abdur Rahman, then about

[1] Afterwards Sir Lepel Griffin.
[2] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 409.

1880. forty years of age, was a strong, resolute, able man, who had inherited from his grandfather the gift of statesmanship. Although he made no secret of the facts that he had been a pensioner of Russia for the last ten years, and would not now have returned to his native country without General Kaufmann's leave, he was by no means unfriendly to England. The Russians, he said, had prevented him from interfering in Afghanistan, first because of their agreement with the British Government, and later on account of their understanding with Sher Ali. Now they had released him from restraint, and even provided him with arms. Although a Russian pensioner was not quite the sort of chief contemplated for Afghanistan by the authors of the forward policy, the Indian Government and the India Office both decided that in the circumstances to acknowledge Abdur Rahman was the best course before them. The Viceroy thought that this new Amir would agree to his terms, and would gratefully accept Kabul from us, leaving Kandahar in British hands. But Lord Lytton had mistaken his man. Abdur Rahman had no intention of acquiescing in a divided Afghanistan. He claimed the entire heritage of Dost Mohammed, and, with or without assistance, he was prepared to fight for it. Lord Lytton might proclaim Sher Ali Khan through Colonel St. John as Sirdar of Kandahar, and disclaim the need of a treaty with Abdur Rahman. Abdur Rahman wanted no treaty. What he wanted was Afghanistan. A "strong and friendly Afghan power," such as Lord Lytton still professed to desire, was quite incompatible with his further object, "the severance of Kandahar from the Kabul power." Such, however, was the decision of Lord Lytton and Lord Cranbrook, as communicated to the new "Amir of Kabul." Mean-

while the condition of Afghanistan was much disturbed, partisans of Yakub were gathered, and it was thought necessary for the pacification of the country that Sir Donald Stewart should march from Kandahar to Kabul. Sir Donald achieved this enterprise by a brilliant feat of arms, not sufficiently appreciated at the time, between the 1st of April and the 2nd of May. He had six thousand men in three divisions, which united at Khelat-i-Ghilzai. At Ahmed Khel, about twenty miles south of Ghazni, the centre and rallying-point of Yakub's supporters, he fought on the 19th of April a successful action against a large force of the enemy, who occupied a low ridge of hills, outflanking on their right the left of the British line. A thousand Afghan horsemen charged with desperate energy the lancers below them, and it was only by placing every man of the reserve in the firing line that they could be kept at bay until they were forced back by some well-directed shells. But while the Afghans sacrificed about three thousand men, our own losses were trifling, and this was one of the decisive battles in the history of British India. For although Sir Donald Stewart, a man equally valuable in council and in war, had to disperse the remnants of the vanquished force a few days later, his subsequent advance to Kabul was not molested, and it became possible to retire from Afghanistan without any risk to the reputation of the Paramount Power. Lord Lytton, who had committed a grievous blunder in trusting Yakub Khan, refused to make direct terms with Abdur Rahman. That potentate, who had one of the clearest heads and strongest wills in India, was simply told that Kandahar, with Sibi and Pishin, would be retained by the British Government, while he might do as he pleased with Kabul and Herat. But power had already passed

1880.

Sir Donald Stewart's march to Kabul.

Battle of Ahmed Khel.

1880. from the authors of the Afghan War when Sir Donald Stewart entered Kabul.

The best part of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, his financial policy, was still incomplete. After the establishment of the Famine Insurance Fund, already described, he proceeded to harmonise the tariff with the principle of Free Trade. The duties then imposed upon cotton goods from Manchester were in their nature protective, and had as such been condemned by Lord Northbrook in 1875. A year later Lord Salisbury, who seldom minced his words, declared that "the interests of India imperatively required the timely removal of a tax which was at once wrong in principle, injurious in its practical effect, and self-destructive in its operation."[1] If it had been self-destructive in its operation, it could hardly have been injurious in its practical effect. But any stick will do to beat a dog with, and the Indian cotton duties, as levied in 1876, were clearly bad. The government of India from Downing Street was regarded by the Cabinet of those days as a fundamental doctrine, and Lord Lytton recognised that he had no discretion except in choosing the most appropriate time for carrying out the order of his superiors against the views of his own Council. He was, however, himself a Free Trader, and had no personal difficulty in obedience. The House of Commons supported Lord Salisbury, and unanimously voted that "the duties now levied upon cotton manufactures imported into India, being protective in their nature, are contrary to sound commercial policy, and ought to be repealed without delay so soon as the financial condition of India will admit." Lord Cranbrook took the same view as Lord Salisbury, and dwelt in a truly Cobdenite spirit upon the

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 476.

danger of allowing a nascent industry to grow up under the blighting influence of protection. The requirements of India compelled Lord Lytton to proceed by degrees, and prevented him from abolishing the duties altogether. But the Budgets of 1879 and 1880 went so far as to free from taxation all cotton imports which seriously competed with Indian manufactures, thereby removing a grievance which affected the consumers of India no less than the producers of Lancashire. 1879.

The autumn of 1879 is celebrated for a famous oratorical campaign. Parliament was nearly six years old, and a General Election could not, without great public inconvenience, be much longer delayed. The usual result ensued, and the discussion of public questions was transferred from Parliament to the platform. Agricultural depression led to the Farmers' Alliance, framed to protect tenants against the loss of their capital, to give them security in their holdings, and to guard them from the undue preservation of game. Lord Hartington, who spoke with some authority for the landed interest, pronounced the agricultural system to be on its trial, and asked whether artificial restraints did not prevent the distribution of the soil among small proprietors. Lord Beaconsfield, making an unwonted excursion into the sphere of economic science, laid down the doctrine that landlord, tenant, and labourer represented a mysterious and immutable principle of "three profits," all of which a peasant proprietor would have to realise before he could make his holding pay. Meanwhile symptoms of improving trade were seen in large orders for rails from America, and on Lord Mayor's Day the Prime Minister pointed with satisfaction to the larger business in chemicals as an infallible sign of returning prosperity.[1]

The Farmers' Alliance.

The three profits.

Improvement in trade.

[1] It was on this occasion that Lord Beaconsfield revived Lord

1879.

Distress in Ireland.

But prosperity did not return to Ireland, where the harvest was bad, the peat ruined by rain, and the potato crop a failure. Irish statistics were ominous. There was an increase of pauperism and a diminution of deposits in banks. Foreign trade and railway traffic diminished. The consumption of luxuries declined, and the Court of Bankruptcy was crowded with farmers. An agitation against rent was set on foot, and Mr. Davitt, assisted by Mr. Parnell, founded the Land League. The object of this Association was to provide a guarantee for the tenant against unjust rent, and was therefore not in itself unlawful. But the means suggested were certainly beyond the law.

The Land League.

Nov. 2.

At Gurteen, in Sligo, Mr. Parnell advised the farmers to keep a firm grip of their homesteads, and pay no more rent than they thought fair. Mr. Daly, proprietor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, urged that if tenants were evicted, they should be put back, and Mr. Davitt, who had been released from penal servitude [1] on a ticket-of-leave, declared that "rent for land in any circumstances, prosperous times or bad times, is nothing more nor less than an unjust and immoral tax upon the industry of a people." For these and similar utterances Davitt, Daly, and two others were arrested by the Irish Government. But they were immediately released on bail, and no further proceedings were taken against them.

Serious as the state of Ireland had become, and more serious as it became during the winter, the subject that appealed most directly at this time to popular audiences was the foreign policy of the Government. Lord Salisbury in defending it at

Palmerston's *Civis Romanus* in the equally recondite Latin *Imperium et Libertas*. But the Roman State rested on slavery, and perfect freedom was only enjoyed by full citizens of imperial Rome.

[1] In 1877, by Mr. Cross.

Manchester lapsed so far from dignity and good taste as to call the report of an alliance between Germany and Austria "glad tidings of great joy." It was supposed that the Central Powers could only combine against Russia, though what quarrel they had with her did not appear. But although Mr. Bright answered Lord Salisbury in his best style, and in the same place, the political event of the autumn at home was Mr. Gladstone's visit to Midlothian. So far back as January Mr. Gladstone had given a promise to contest the metropolitan county of Scotland at the next election against the Duke of Buccleugh's eldest son, Lord Dalkeith.[1] But his first speech to the constituency was not delivered till the 26th of November, when thousands came to hear him in the Music Hall at Edinburgh. Foreign policy was his principal, though not his sole, topic during this campaign, which lasted, almost without intermission, for a fortnight, and proved the old man of sixty-nine to have lost nothing in vigour or vitality of body or mind. Never had he been more eloquent. Never had he met with such intense and such sustained enthusiasm. On his journey from Liverpool to Edinburgh "the stations where the train stopped were crowded, thousands flocked from neighbouring towns and villages to main centres on the line of route, and even at wayside spots hundreds assembled, merely to catch a glimpse of the express as it dashed through."[2] His numerous speeches, which dealt with finance as well as politics, were all on the highest level, adapted to the trained intelligence of the best audiences in Great Britain. It was the first time that a full declaration of principles and opinions on public affairs had been made by a statesman of the highest official and

1879.

Oct. 10. The Austro-German Alliance.

The Midlothian campaign.

Nov. 24.

[1] Afterwards Duke.

[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 587.

1879. personal rank not indirectly through Parliament to the nation, but directly to the people, who are the source of Parliamentary power. Mr. Gladstone's avowed object was to procure a condemnation of Lord Beaconsfield's Government from the electors at the polls. Although he had taken part in eleven General Elections, he declared that he had not known a time at which the interests of the country were so deeply at stake. He challenged not one measure or two, but a whole system of administration. Nor did he confine himself to criticism and invective. He set up an alternative system of his own, and put it clearly, even tersely, into a few leading propositions. Some of these, such as the principle of public economy and the equal rights of all States, large or small, have permanent truth and value. Others, made for the moment, are simple reversals of Lord Beaconsfield's Acts, such as the maintenance of European Concert, the avoidance of entangling engagements, and a foreign policy inspired by the love of freedom. But Mr. Gladstone must have fancied himself once more face to face with Palmerston when he denounced as mischievous and fallacious the analogy of imperial Rome as a guide to British statesmanship. Except Ireland, he dealt with every topic of importance, and on some points, as was natural, he went astray. "The invasion of a free people in the Transvaal" was a singularly infelicitous way of saying that a South African Republic in embarrassed circumstances had been annexed on the mistaken hypothesis that its inhabitants desired annexation; while the idea that the Zulu army had no other purpose than to defend with their naked bodies their hearths and homes was a mere travesty of the truth. Yet, in despite of errors due to imperfect information, these Midlothian speeches are not surpassed, or

surpassed only by Burke's, in masterly and consummate presentment of the case for a political party before the ultimate court of appeal. 1879.

How far the enthusiasm of Edinburgh, of Midlothian, of Glasgow, reflected the feeling or judgment of the nation as a whole it was not then easy to say. The chief Liberal Whip, Mr. Adam,[1] himself a Scotsman, was confident of the result in Midlothian, but regarded the English counties as hopeless, and did not anticipate a large majority.[2] The London Press was mainly hostile to Liberalism, and especially to Mr. Gladstone. Beyond the London sphere of influence, especially in Scotland and the north of England, the best newspapers were on his side. The by-elections had been various and indecisive. But at the close of the year occurred a Liberal victory of some importance. During the Midlothian campaign died John Arthur Roebuck, aged seventy-eight, Member for Sheffield. Having begun his career as an extreme Radical, Mr. Roebuck closed it, after many vicissitudes, as an ardent supporter of Lord Beaconsfield, who had raised him to the Privy Council in recognition of his services the previous year. He was succeeded by a Radical Nonconformist of the aggressively pacific type; and this election in a town so much given to Jingoism as Sheffield was hailed as a Liberal triumph, though the Conservative candidate was not five hundred votes behind.

Political prospects.

Nov. 30. Death of Mr. Roebuck.

Liberal victory at Sheffield.

Dec. 22.

The year 1880 began with a flood of political oratory, which only waited for the close of the Christmas holidays to break out. Even in contemplating another session the Government were accused of departure from the established precedent which reduces the Septennial Act to six working 1880.

[1] Afterwards Sir William Adam, Governor of Madras.
[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 586–587.

1880. years, and no Member of Parliament knew when he might be required to meet his constituents.

The Irish vote. The condition of Ireland added to the disturbance of public life, and politicians were reminded that there was an Irish vote in England. Nowhere was it stronger than in Liverpool, where a vacancy was made by death in the middle of January. The Liberal candidate, Lord Ramsay,[1] promised to vote for Mr. Shaw's proposed inquiry into the feasibility of Home Rule, and Lord Hartington declined to repudiate his allegiance on that account. Lord Ramsay, however, was not returned, and a still more striking victory was won for the Government in Southwark by Mr. Clarke,[2] who polled more votes than both his opponents, a Liberal and a candidate of labour, combined.

Conservative victory in Southwark. Feb. 6.

Feb. 13.

Feb. 5. Meanwhile Parliament had met, and it became necessary to legislate at once for the relief of Irish distress. The serious nature of the calamity was admitted on all hands, and a charitable fund had been opened by the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Lord-Lieutenant. The Lord Mayor of Dublin started another, refusing to co-operate with the Castle, and Mr. Parnell visited the United States in January, not so much to procure relief for suffering as to denounce the "landlordism" which in his opinion was responsible for it. The Government Bill, authorising the construction of public works by money from the Irish Church Surplus, was passed early in March, with an unfortunate alteration made by the House of Lords. The Bill as it left the Commons restrained the right of eviction on estates to which funds from the Surplus had been applied. The Lords struck this salutary provision out, and their amendment, fruitful in the seeds of disturbance, was accepted

Act for relief of Irish distress.

[1] Afterwards Earl of Dalhousie.
[2] Afterwards Sir Edward Clarke.

by the Commons. The only other business accomplished by the House of Commons was the adoption of a new Standing Order against obstruction. Although the Speaker, or Chairman, habitually calls by name upon a Member who rises to take part in debate, the threat of naming a Member in the middle of his speech, often made, never carried out, was the last resort of outraged authority. No one quite knew what would happen to the offender, though there was a vague impression that he would be given into the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms.[1] Sir Stafford Northcote now carried a resolution that for disregarding the authority of the Chair, the House might at once without debate suspend a Member named by the Speaker or Chairman for the remainder of the sitting. "Ointment for broken bones," as Epictetus says. However desirable such a rule might be for the interests of order, it was perfectly futile as a weapon against organised obstruction.

1880. Order for suspension of Members.

The only measure introduced by Lord Beaconsfield's Government in 1880 which caused any excitement out of doors was the Metropolitan Water Bill. Eight Companies then, and long afterwards, supplied London with water. Mr. Cross proposed as Home Secretary that their plant and business should be transferred to a Central Board of twenty-one members, partly nominated, and partly elected. The value of the property to be bought was estimated at twenty-seven millions odd, and the Companies agreed to take in payment a Water Stock issued by the Board at three and a half per cent. The Bill was never discussed in Parliament, for no serious attempt was made to pass it. As soon as it had been introduced an out-

The London Water Bill.

March 2.

[1] When Speaker Denison was asked this question in the course of his evidence before a Select Committee on Procedure, he replied, "Heaven only knows."

1880. cry was raised against the extravagance of the compensation. Mr. Cross had no motive for dealing unjustly with the ratepayers of London, and in framing his scheme he had consulted an eminent accountant, as impartial as himself. But the figures of the share-market proved conclusively that he had made a most advantageous bargain for the Companies. High as the premium on the Water Companies' Stock had risen during 1879 in expectation of a deal, the increase after the appearance of the Bill was stupendous, and no amount of argument could get rid of the fact that there had been an enormous addition to the speculative value of the Companies' property.

Announcement of Dissolution. March 8. But the Bill had a short life. Within a week of its introduction Lord Beaconsfield and Sir Stafford Northcote announced in their respective Houses that as soon as the Budget had been introduced, and the necessary votes taken, Parliament would be dissolved. In an instant all was confusion.

March 12. Suspension in the Sinking Fund. The House of Commons hardly listened to Sir Stafford's financial statement, in which he proposed to meet the deficit, exceeding three millions, by the suspension of his own Sinking Fund. He thus avoided the necessity, if not the duty, of imposing fresh taxation, which would have been unpopular, and therefore unsuitable to the circumstances of

Conveyance of voters. the moment. These circumstances, on the other hand, assisted the passage of a Bill for facilitating corrupt practices by the abolition of restrictions upon the conveyance of voters to the poll in England.[1] But after the 8th of March all eyes were turned from an expiring House of Commons to the

Lord Beaconsfield's letter. Constituencies of the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister, having no constituents, addressed a public letter to the Duke of Marlborough, Lord-

[1] Scotland and Ireland were illogically, though beneficially, exempted from the operation of this Act.

Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Beaconsfield had the genius of the unexpected, and the contents of this remarkable document excited general surprise. It contained no reference to any legislation, past, present, or prospective, for England or for Scotland. It was a manifesto against Home Rule, which it described as "a danger, in its ultimate results, scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine." "All men of light and leading" were urged to resist this "destructive doctrine," the "disintegration of the United Kingdom." No other topic was discussed, but the country was assured that "peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendency, of England in the Councils of Europe." This letter gave the Liberal party the Irish vote without the need for any exertions of their own. Three days after its appearance Lord Hartington replied to it in an address to the electors of North-East Lancashire, whither he migrated from the Radnor Boroughs. He declared plainly that he regarded Home Rule as impracticable and mischievous. But he deplored the language of passionate exaggeration, and recommended "equal laws" as a remedy for Irish discontent. Mr. Gladstone wrote to the people of Midlothian in similar terms, and the attempt to confound Liberals with Home Rulers entirely failed. Even Mr. John Morley, who stood for Westminster on much the same principles as Mill, refused to follow the example of Lord Ramsay by promising to vote for Mr. Shaw's motion, and the one conspicuous Home Ruler in England was Mr. Cowen of Newcastle, a Radical, almost revolutionary, politician, but an ardent supporter of Lord Beaconsfield in foreign affairs. Mr. Gladstone, however, as well as Lord Hartington, made too light of Lord Beaconsfield's "terrifying insinuations." Whether or not they were

1880.

March 11.

1880. designed, as Mr. Gladstone said, "to hide from view the acts of the Ministry," they were neither unfounded nor extravagant. Home Rule was a political question, to be settled by argument and reason. The social and agrarian disturbance of Ireland in the spring of 1880 demanded the immediate application of the best remedies that statesmanship could provide. But, whatever may have been Lord Beaconsfield's intentions, the contest was fought without reference to Home Rule.

The General Election of 1880.

When Parliament was formally dissolved on the 24th of March, Mr. Gladstone had been for a week in Midlothian, renewing and colouring his indictment against the whole policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration at home and abroad. He set the note for the Liberal party, and the chief theme of his splendid, inexhaustible eloquence was foreign affairs. "To disparage eloquence," says Mr. Morley, "is to depreciate mankind,"[1] and Mr. Gladstone's eloquence was a powerful agent in the General Election of 1880. But there were other forces at work. Lord Hartington, who made no attempt to be eloquent, delivered more speeches than Mr. Gladstone, and his argumentative duel in Lancashire with the most active of the Ministers, Mr. Cross, increased his reputation as a statesman. It had been his own wish to retire from the lead of his party in the House of Commons after the first Midlothian campaign in the autumn of 1879.[2] But he was overruled, and he could not have been more active in the struggle if Mr. Gladstone had never returned to public life. The main feature of Liberal strategy was direct attack, and their positive proposals were few. Chief among them was the enlargement of the franchise in counties, which even Mr. Lowe reluctantly

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 594.
[2] Lord Selborne's *Memorials*, part ii. vol. i. 471.

accepted, and Mr. Goschen alone resisted to the last. It is improbable that this question, serious as it was, affected many seats. A more potent factor was the Birmingham Caucus, borrowed by Mr. Chamberlain, a manager of singular adroitness, from the machine politicians of the United States. The object of this system, at all events in England, is not so much the formation of opinion as its organised embodiment. Votes may be scattered and wasted, especially in constituencies returning three Members, as Birmingham then did. Mr. Chamberlain's Caucus avoided this futile drain of power, and undoubtedly strengthened the practical forces of Liberalism. He became the leader of the Radicals, for whom Lord Hartington was not sufficiently advanced, and who had not forgotten Mr. Gladstone's prejudice against unsectarian education. Moderate Liberals, on the other hand, were gratified by the accession of Lord Derby, who severed himself from the Conservative party before the dissolution because he had no sympathy with Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism. Lord Derby, though destitute of his father's showy gifts and accomplishments, had the invaluable art of putting plain good sense into good plain English, and expressing the thoughts of ordinary people better than they could express them themselves. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, unlike Lord Derby and Lord Hartington, was apt to make nervous citizens feel uncomfortable, as, for instance, when at Edinburgh he took occasion, misled by a false report that the Emperor of Austria had told Sir Henry Elliot he hoped Lord Beaconsfield would win, to make an elaborate attack upon a friendly Power, and exclaimed, in language which would have rejoiced Lord Palmerston's heart, "There is not an instance — there is not a spot upon the whole map where you can lay your finger and say, 'There Austria

1880.

March 17.

1880. did good.'" The words attributed to the Emperor
March 23. were contradicted by Sir Stafford Northcote at Shoreditch, on the authority of the new Austro-Hungarian Chancellor, Baron Haymerle, and Lord
March 20. Hartington had already made a point of referring to Austria in more friendly terms. The condition of the country was not unfavourable to the Government. For while agriculture was depressed, trade was reviving, and even the harvest of 1879 showed a considerable improvement upon the harvest of 1878. The last words uttered in Parliament by the Prime Minister before his appeal to the country indicated that in his opinion the approach of more abundant seasons offered a better prospect for the farmer than a return to reciprocity or protection. In London the Water Bill was unpopular, and the loss of the seat which Mr. Clarke had so recently won at Southwark might fairly be set down to that ill-starred measure. Yet the City of London was Conservative by two to one, and the party might have carried all the four seats if they had known their strength. Mr. Goschen, notwithstanding the moderation of his Liberalism, withdrew from the centre of British finance to the little borough of Ripon. The general result of the elections, however, was not doubtful after the earliest returns. The polls began on the last day of March, and by the third day of April the Ministerial majority had disappeared. If the Conservatives relied upon the counties to stem the torrent, they relied in vain. They still retained with the higher suffrage which prevailed outside the boroughs a majority of two to one. But that involved serious losses, and on the whole the Liberal preponderance over Conservatives alone was 107. Only eight Conservatives came from Scotland, the same number as from London. Ireland, on the other hand, returned no more than thirteen Liberals against twenty-five

Conservatives, and sixty-one Home Rulers. If the Home Rulers voted with the Liberals their majority would be 173. Against a combination of Conservatives and Home Rulers the Liberals could muster, all told, a majority of 41. Mr. Gladstone was elected for Midlothian, and he also stood, without his own consent, at the head of the poll for Leeds. When he exercised his legal option in favour of Midlothian, the enthusiasm of Leeds, as much personal as political, sent his youngest son Herbert without a contest to the House of Commons. In Ireland Mr. Parnell, who had headed the revolt from Isaac Butt, was elected in three places, and chose the city of Cork. The cause of Home Rule had carried a large majority of Irish electors, but the Home Rulers in Parliament were divided among themselves, and Mr. Parnell was no more prepared to follow Mr. Shaw than he had been content to obey Mr. Butt. While Scotland was almost solid, in England there were the usual ups and downs. Lord Hartington was successful in North-East Lancashire. Westminster rejected Mr. John Morley. Liverpool, almost alone among large towns, remained staunchly Conservative. The poll at Newcastle was headed by Mr. Cowen, who differed from the Liberal party, and sided with the Government, on the most important question of the day. No Minister, except Mr. Lowther, was defeated, and most of the leading Ministerialists reappeared in the House of Commons. But the verdict of the country was decisive, and Lord Beaconsfield followed his own precedent of 1868, as Mr. Gladstone had followed it in 1874, by resigning office before the new Parliament met. 1880. April 18.

The state of the nation.

The General Election of 1880 did not occur at an auspicious time. Although a prudent, skilful, and moderate Chancellor of the Exchequer had set

1880. up a valuable Sinking Fund, and had restrained taxation within reasonable limits, a declining revenue showed a diminution in the amount and the profits of trade. In 1879 the distress among the industrial classes had been keen and widespread. At the beginning of 1880 things had begun to mend, and Lord Derby, a good authority, who was no longer connected either with his old colleagues or

Jan. 8. with his old party, observed in a speech at Huddersfield that there had never before been so little suffering in proportion to the commercial disturbance. One part of the United Kingdom, however, was an exception to the rule. In Ireland there was real scarcity, and actual want. The Land League was in the first instance not a political agitation, though it became one in the hands of Mr. Parnell. It arose from an inability on the part of tenants to pay rents which they could not afford for land which they could not leave. The country was seething with disaffection, and in a really dangerous state. Beyond the limits of these islands the chief points of peril and disquiet were in South Africa and on the north-western frontier of India. In South Africa Sir Bartle Frere had crushed the Zulus. But his policy of Federation appeared to be a failure, and the Transvaal, so far from desiring to federate, was chafing against the British yoke. The language of Mr. Gladstone and of Lord Hartington was regarded by the Boers as a distinct pledge that their country would be given back to them if the Liberals returned to power. Sir George Colley, who had been Lord Lytton's secretary in India, became High Commissioner of South Africa and Governor of Natal, in place of Sir Garnet Wolseley, so that Sir Bartle's jurisdiction was limited to Cape Colony. The Dutch in the Colony were for the most part loyal, but the misgovernment of the Transvaal by

Sir Owen Lanyon was injuriously affecting their allegiance. The situation in Afghanistan was dubious and menacing. Although the policy of Lord Lytton was to break up the country and to separate Kandahar from Kabul, the new Amir, Abdur Rahman, did not concur in the arrangement, but claimed the whole territory of Dost Mohammed. The war had put an end to the Treaty of Gundamak, and no other treaty had been substituted for it. Abdur Rahman was simply given to understand that he could hold that part of Afghanistan not occupied by British troops if he was strong enough to keep it for himself. Afghanistan was treated as a hostile country, against which precautions must be taken by strengthening the frontier. While, therefore, the Treaty of Berlin was carried out with no more than an inevitable amount of preliminary friction, and the peace of Europe was not immediately disturbed by the changes made in the Treaty of San Stefano, the prospect in South Africa and in India was overcast. Nor was the "Condition of England Question," as Carlyle called it, by any means satisfactory. Ireland was not the only part of the United Kingdom that had been visited by distress. Say the historians of Trade Unionism, writing of the years 1878 and 1879, "From one end of the kingdom to the other, great firms became bankrupt, mines and ironworks were stopped, ships lay idle in the ports, and a universal feeling of despondency and distrust spread like a blight into every corner of the industrial world." [1] Every class had been hit, and the working class hardest of all. Not since trade unions were first established had they fallen so low in members and enthusiasm as they fell in 1879. The agricultural labourers were disintegrated. The National Union of Miners maintained itself only in the three 1880.

[1] Webb's *History of Trade Unionism*, pp. 330–331.

1880. counties of Northumberland, Durham, and York. In South Wales Trade Unionism ceased to exist. The failure of the Glasgow Bank brought most of the Scottish unions to destruction. The number of strikes in 1879 reached the unprecedented figure of 72, and they were almost all unsuccessful. The wages of workmen were reduced, and the hours of work were extended. In the unhappy conflict of labour and capital the employers were victorious, and it was not forgotten in after years that they had pressed their advantage to the utmost when circumstances were all in their favour. Their political economy taught as a cardinal principle that luxury was bad for the working man. Their own profits were undoubtedly curtailed; and though the period of depression reached its lowest depth in 1879, recovery was slow. Whatever else Imperialism may be, it is not cheap. From 1876 to 1880 the country had been kept in a fever of excitement by the rumour and the occurrence of wars. Such an electrical state of the political atmosphere does not encourage commercial enterprise or inspire with confidence the promoters of industry. Lord Beaconsfield had excited the enthusiasm of his followers and the interest of his opponents. The eyes of Europe were upon him. Even Prince Bismarck was not more conspicuous. But those who returned him to power in 1874 were not in love with a policy of adventure, and they had not expected what happened. They were tired of Mr. Gladstone's multifarious activity, and they believed that his successor would let them alone. The quiet sessions of 1874, 1875, and 1876 increased the popularity of the Government. Mr. Disraeli seemed to be a dictator and Mr. Gladstone a spent force. By the Eastern Question everything was changed. Lord Beaconsfield brought the country within sight of war. Mr. Gladstone prevented the

immeasurable calamity of war itself when no British interest was concerned. Imperialism had been vulgarised by Jingoism, and Cyprus excited only ridicule where Egypt would have appealed to the pride of a governing race. No tangible evidence had been produced to show that the invasion of Afghanistan was a necessary measure of defence against Russia, or that the north-western frontier of India was made more secure by the occupation of Kandahar. The Government could not be blamed for appealing to the country before the Indian and South African questions had been settled. Dissolution was inevitable, and Ministers were criticised less for hastening than for postponing it. But for constitutional niceties of this kind the country cared little, if at all. Lord Beaconsfield and his colleagues, if the phrase be not a mere synonym for Lord Beaconsfield, had to face things as they were. They neither gained nor lost by remaining in office as long as they decently could. Trade, with all that depends upon trade, was more favourable in 1880 than in 1879, and unexampled prosperity had not saved Mr. Gladstone from defeat in 1874. The General Election of 1880 was no mere swing of the pendulum. It was an emphatic condemnation of Imperialism as understood by Lord Beaconsfield, and a judgment for the sober, righteous politics which are neither more nor less than morality enlarged. 1880.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORM IN THE WEST

1880. THE last meeting of Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet was held on the 21st of April 1880. On the 22nd the Queen sent for the Marquess of Hartington, and commanded him to form an Administration. She might as well have ordered him to be the most popular man in the country. Lord Hartington at once told Her Majesty that no Government could be made without Mr. Gladstone, who would not, in his opinion, take any office except the first. There can be no doubt that both the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield desired to exclude Mr. Gladstone. No explanation was given for passing over Lord Granville, who had been sent for when he was not Leader in 1859, and to whom Mr. Gladstone had resigned the Leadership in 1875; but it is probable that the Queen considered Lord Hartington as less devoted than Lord Granville to his former chief. Lord Hartington, however, behaved like an honourable and a sensible man. To satisfy his Sovereign, and for no other purpose, he asked Mr. Gladstone the formal question of which he knew the answer. Mr. Gladstone confirmed his anticipation, and next day he returned to Windsor, this time with Lord Granville, to give the Queen the unwelcome assurance for which she had asked. In his first Midlothian speech Mr. Gladstone had said, "I hope the verdict of the country will give to

Lord Hartington's Commission.

His failure.

Nov. 25, 1879.

Lord Granville and Lord Hartington the responsible charge of its affairs." But, as Mr. Disraeli said on another occasion, a good deal had happened since then, and outside the inner circles of Whig politics, nobody doubted whose victory it was, or who the Prime Minister should be. Mr. Gladstone did not hesitate to obey the Queen's command conveyed through Lord Granville, and on the 23rd of April he kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury With a courage and confidence unparalleled in a man of seventy he took also the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, under Mr. Pitt's old arrangement of a salary and a half.[1] If he had united these two offices in 1868, and divided them in 1880, he would have been wiser, and the results more satisfactory. The two Leaders of Opposition in the two Houses, to whose unselfish generosity Mr. Gladstone paid a high tribute, had naturally the first claim to be considered in forming a Cabinet. Lord Granville returned to the Foreign Office in perfect health and strength, but with a mental and moral vigour which had been insensibly impaired since 1874. Lord Hartington, after taking time to consider, accepted the India Office, which circumstances had made unusually prominent and important since 1878. The Queen would have preferred to see him at the War Office. Her Majesty had been persuaded, probably by the Duke of Cambridge, that Lord Cardwell's system of short service was a failure, and hoped that Lord Hartington would set it aside. Mr. Gladstone was better informed, and adhered to his own arrangement. Lord Cardwell himself, though still anxious to serve his country, was incapacitated by failing health of body and mind. A singularly disagreeable problem was solved

1880.

Mr. Gladstone Prime Minister.

His Cabinet.

[1] Mr. Gladstone's official income was £7500. Mr. Pitt's was £10,500. But Pitt was Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. See Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, Appendix C.

1880. by the safe, if not brilliant, appointment of Mr. Childers. Lord Selborne was an inevitable Chancellor, though his professional were perhaps greater than his political claims. Lord Derby refused office on the ground that he had too recently passed from one side to the other. Mr. Goschen was most unfortunately excluded by his conscientious unwillingness to extend the franchise in counties. Mr. Lowe, on the other hand, who was quite prepared to reverse his convictions on this point, had made himself impossible as a colleague, and disappeared from history as Viscount Sherbrooke. The House of Lords was adequately, some thought more than adequately, represented in the Cabinet. Lord Kimberley, who had strong Palmerstonian instincts, became once more Secretary for the Colonies. Lord Spencer was President of the Council. Lord Northbrook was First Lord of the Admiralty. The Duke of Argyll, to whom, more than to any other man, Mr. Gladstone had been indebted for constant support throughout the Eastern crisis, had only the sinecure office of Privy Seal. But where were the Radicals? Mr. Bright, a representative of the old Radicalism rather than the new, was again Chancellor of the Duchy. Mr. Forster, who had practically ceased to be a Radical of any kind, new or old, became Chief Secretary for Ireland, and had to deal with a people he was incapable of appreciating or understanding. Sir William Harcourt, the new Home Secretary, was a Radical on the surface, but a Whig below. That was all Mr. Gladstone intended to do for the Radicals, to whom he had been for some time steadily, perhaps unconsciously, leaning, unless indeed they were prepared to regard him as one of themselves. It was only when Sir Charles Dilke refused to take anything if neither Mr. Chamberlain nor himself were in the Cabinet that the Prime

Minister became aware of the discontent which his exclusiveness had provoked. Then he yielded to what was almost a menace, and chose Mr. Chamberlain to sit in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade.[1] It was the post for which he was best fitted; and Sir Charles Dilke was also in his right place as representative of the Foreign Office in the House of Commons. 1880.

Even when this particular obstacle had been surmounted, the composition of the Cabinet was perilously discordant. Among the fourteen men of whom it was composed were Mr. Gladstone, who had supplanted the Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, and Lord Hartington, the Leader supplanted; Lord Selborne, most ecclesiastical of politicians, and Mr. Bright, most political of Dissenters; the Gladstonian Lord Granville and the Palmerstonian Lord Kimberley; Mr. Chamberlain, who had introduced in England the American Caucus, and Mr. Forster, who had refused to recognise it in his own constituency of Bradford. The exclusion from the Cabinet of Mr. Fawcett, Postmaster-General, was not justified by his blindness, and the claims of Sir Charles Dilke seemed greater than the claims of Mr. Dodson, President of the Local Government Board. Mr. Stansfeld was unaccountably passed over, and neither Mr. Trevelyan nor Mr. Courtney was at first included in the Government at all. There were grounds for Radical complaint, and Mr. Chamberlain had more sympathy with some of his friends outside the Cabinet than with any of his colleagues. That Mr. Chamberlain should be a Cabinet Minister at all was regarded by most Conservatives, and by some Liberals, as a danger and a scandal. Though a substantial citizen, with a larger pecuniary interest in the maintenance of order than most of his critics, The seeds of discord.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. pp. 621–630.

1880. and a high reputation in Birmingham for his masterly handling of local affairs, he was regarded as a dangerous Socialist, who would not hesitate to set the poor against the rich. He had indeed proclaimed the duty of the State to raise the condition of the people. An ardent supporter of Trade Unionism and of direct taxation, he urged that the working classes were unduly burdened, and that Parliament did not sufficiently consider their needs. Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism was to him a lavish waste of energy, which should be spent at home. What was the annexation of Kandahar or of the Transvaal compared with the happiness and contentment of the United Kingdom? Mr. Chamberlain stood forward boldly as the champion of the labourer, and capitalists took alarm. Were they to be made the victims of a social revolution patronised by Ministers of the Queen? The new President of the Board of Trade was evidently in earnest, and he spoke with an incisive vigour which compelled the attention of friend and foe. The stormy petrel of politics, he seemed to typify the new Radicalism which would spare nothing, not even Monarchy or rent.

The Viceroyalty of India.

Cabinet-making was not Mr. Gladstone's only task. The most splendid post in the British Empire had immediately to be filled. Lord Lytton had long made up his mind to retire from the Viceroyalty of India when there was a change of Government at home. He had become in India a party man, and in his letter to Lord

May 4. Beaconsfield accepting an Earldom he referred to the "party" which had stood by him "during the last four troubled years."[1] The new Viceroy, a man as unlike himself as possible, was the Marquess of Ripon. The clamour which his appointment raised, bigoted and intolerant as it was, must have

[1] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 425.

convinced the Prime Minister that his own writings of 1874 on the Vatican Decrees were not distinguished by worldly wisdom. For if, as Macaulay said, in a country where people worship cows, the differences between Christians seem less than usually important, it was tempting to remind Mr. Gladstone that, if his own words were true, Lord Ripon in becoming a convert to Rome had "placed his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another."[1] 1880.

In one respect, and in one respect alone, Mr. Gladstone was fortunate at the outset of his new career. With the beginning of May the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which under its first editor, Mr. Frederick Greenwood, had been his ablest and most formidable opponent in the metropolitan press, changed hands and politics. The new editor, Mr. John Morley, agreed at that time less with the Prime Minister than with the President of the Board of Trade, but he gave invaluable support to the Liberal Government from the philosophic point of view, and his influence was most felt where democratic principles have least play. Mr. Greenwood soon found in the *St. James's Gazette* an outlet for his hatred of Radicalism and his pungent style, but the addition of a novel force to the Liberal journalism of London came at the right moment for a Cabinet surrounded by difficulties which had to be faced. The new *Pall Mall*.

Otherwise the Government of 1880 seemed to be marked with misfortune from the beginning. Scarcely had it been formed when a Cabinet Minister suffered disaster. Sir William Harcourt had sat for the city of Oxford since 1868, but on presenting himself for re-election as Home Secretary Harcourt's defeat.

[1] The Earl of Kenmare, an hereditary Catholic, was at the same time appointed Lord Chamberlain, and had the honour to be coupled with Lord Ripon in many resolutions of protest. An organ of High Churchmanship, on the other hand, expressed its satisfaction that the new Viceroy was at least a Christian. Those who play at religious persecution play with edged tools.

1880. May 8. he was ousted by Mr. Hall, a local brewer, and was indebted for a seat to the generosity of Mr. Plimsoll, who left Derby in his favour. Neither Oxford nor Mr. Hall gained in the long run by this temporary triumph. Mr. Hall was unseated on petition, the evidence of corruption being so strong as to deprive the city of one Member and leave it with a single representative.[1]

Misfortune, however, dogged the Outs as well as the Ins. Sir John Strachey's Indian Budget, published in March, showed a surplus of half a million, and the Minister protested that India required no help from home to pay the cost of the Afghan War. This was on the assumption, for which Sir John Strachey vouched, that the expense of invading Afghanistan would not be more than nine millions and a half. It turned out to exceed seventeen millions, and the fact of the blunder, though not its precise amount, became known before the new Parliament met. The suggestion that the Tory Cabinet concealed the truth until the Elections were over was unfounded. They were deceived as well as the public. But for the Indian Government there was no excuse at all. Sir John Strachey had accepted blindly the military estimates of Sir Edwin Johnson, which were framed on the principle, severely simple and fatally erroneous, of ignoring all outlay which had not been audited. Lord Lytton bitterly complained that "the powers of military darkness," against which he was always fighting, had tripped him up at last.[2] But of course he had to bear the responsibility, and thus, while the financial part of his administration was on the whole by far the most successful, he left India under a financial cloud.

The flaw in the Indian Budget.

[1] Among the promoters of this righteous retribution was Thomas Hill Green, of Balliol, a good citizen as well as a deep thinker. Nothing, however, was proved against Mr. Hall himself.

[2] *Lord Lytton's Indian Administration*, p. 501.

With the return of the Liberals to power Sir Henry Layard's Eastern career reached its close. Like Lord Lytton, he had represented rather a party than the nation, and he could not be expected to impress upon the Sultan a policy which he had opposed himself. He was recalled from Constantinople, and Mr. Goschen was sent on a special mission to the Porte. Mr. Goschen's object was to obtain the fulfilment of those clauses in the Treaty of Berlin which provided for the total or partial emancipation of Christian races. Montenegro, for instance, had not obtained the rectification of her frontier which had been promised her. Greece was still without Thessaly and Epirus. No reform of Armenia had been even attempted. For the attainment of these purposes Mr. Gladstone relied upon the Concert of Europe, which Lord Granville aimed at securing by a Circular Note. Mr. Goschen left London on the 17th of May, and, after an audience of the Emperor at Vienna, was received by the Sultan on the 3rd of June. Before his departure the way was smoothed for him by an apologetic letter from the Prime Minister to the Austrian Ambassador, Count Karolyi. The Ambassador had complained to Mr. Gladstone of the language used about Austria in Midlothian, at the same time assuring him that the Emperor had never expressed a wish for the success of the Conservatives at the Elections, and that his Imperial Majesty would faithfully observe the Treaty of Berlin. Mr. Gladstone must have been to some extent prepared for this communication by the language of the Queen at Windsor.[1] At all events he replied in terms of almost exaggerated humility, and concluded with language severely criticised by the rigid moralists who had formed the Government of Lord Beaconsfield. "From the moment," he wrote, "when I

1880.

Layard's recall.

Goschen's mission.

May 4.

Gladstone's apology to Karolyi.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. ii. p. 628.

1880. accepted from the Queen the duty of forming an Administration, I forthwith resolved that I would not as a Minister either repeat or even defend any argument or polemical language in regard to more than one foreign Power[1] which I had used individually when in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility." The Emperor of Austria said, "This is the letter of an English gentleman." A vivacious young Tory[2] pronounced it to be "shameful and shameless." But perhaps the best defence of it was Lord Salisbury's attack. Lord Salisbury was surprised that the Emperor should have been so easily satisfied. For Mr. Gladstone "only promised, in recognition of the assurance given by Count Karolyi that Austria did not desire to advance beyond where she now stood, that he would not renew the accusation." A great man can do what a small man cannot, and Mr. Gladstone was too great to stand upon his dignity when he could secure his object, which in this case was the Concert of Europe.

Bradlaugh and the oath.

The troubles of the Government in the House of Commons began before the Prime Minister could take his seat on re-election for Midlothian. During the preliminary process of swearing Members, Mr. Bradlaugh, junior Member for Northampton, claimed to make an affirmation of allegiance instead of an oath, which would, he said, have as an oath no binding effect upon his conscience. He had been permitted on that ground to affirm in courts of law, and he maintained that what he could do there he could do in Parliament. Inasmuch as the legal point was doubtful and depended upon the construction of three statutes, it might well have been left to the Judges. Mr. Speaker Brand

May 3.

[1] Mr. Gladstone afterwards explained that this was an allusion to Russia.

[2] Lord George Hamilton.

referred the matter to the House, then led by Lord Frederick Cavendish, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the highest member of the Administration who did not vacate his seat on appointment. Lord Frederick proposed a Select Committee, which reported against Mr. Bradlaugh's claim by a majority of one. It is curious that on this purely technical question every Member of the Committee voted with his party except Mr. Hopwood, a Liberal lawyer, who had a professional conscience, and turned the scale against his own side. The Report of the Committee was of course not binding on the House. But Mr. Bradlaugh chose to accept it as conclusive, and, not being allowed to affirm, claimed the right of taking the oath. Sir Drummond Wolff, Member for Portsmouth, interposed as the champion of religion, and another Select Committee was appointed, this time at the suggestion of Mr. Gladstone himself, to consider whether the House could prevent a Member from fulfilling his statutory obligation. But it proved impossible to confine the debate within this narrow issue, and the whole character of Mr. Bradlaugh, besides his avowed Atheism, was discussed at large. Mr. Edward Gibson[1] distinguished himself by the vigour with which he denounced a profanation of the oath. The circumstances in which the Bible is kissed by a struggling crowd of new Members cannot be called solemn, and Mr. Gibson fatally weakened his case by admitting that Mr. Bradlaugh might have sworn without hindrance if he had not paraded his own disability. Mill had certainly taken the oath; and Mill proclaims in his *Autobiography* that he never had any religious belief. To Mr. Gladstone the subject was intensely repugnant, and he would gladly have seen the Harpies fly away with Mr. Bradlaugh. But much as he hated

1880.

May 21.

[1] Afterwards Lord Ashbourne.

1880. Atheism, he loved justice more, and stuck to his proposition, which was carried. The second Committee reported that Mr. Bradlaugh should not be allowed to take the oath, but recommended that he should be permitted to affirm at his own risk. Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Bradlaugh's colleague in the representation of Northampton, moved the House to this effect. But his motion was lost in favour of Sir Hardinge Giffard's amendment that Mr. Bradlaugh had no right either to swear
June 22. or to affirm. Next day Mr. Bradlaugh again presented himself to take the oath, and was ordered to withdraw, after being heard in his own defence at the Bar. Refusing to obey, he was committed to the Clock Tower on the motion of Sir Stafford Northcote, who, however, moved the next day for his release. After the vote of the 22nd Mr. Gladstone declined to do anything more, as the House had taken the matter out of his hands. But mere avoidance of responsibility settles nothing, and on the 1st of July the Prime Minister had to resume his functions as Leader of the House. He proposed a general resolution, which was made a standing order, that any Member claiming to make an affirmation should have the opportunity of doing so, subject to his liability by statute. This was carried by a large majority, and Mr. Bradlaugh, after affirming, took his seat on the Liberal benches. Thus the first stage of the conflict ended without much credit to anybody concerned. Mr. Bradlaugh would have gone through a form which was to him a mockery. The Prime Minister had lost control of the House, and suffered virtual defeat at the hands of the Opposition.[1] The Conservative party had shown a sinister readiness to associate with Mr.

[1] Not technical defeat, because the Ministerial Whips did not "tell" for Mr. Labouchere's motion.

Bradlaugh's Atheism such men as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, who supported him for reasons of equity in spite of his opinions. With the conspicuous exception of Mr. Parnell, almost every Irish Member voted against the right of a constituency to choose its own Member. By both sides of the House Mr. Bradlaugh was treated with unchristian discourtesy, and heard in dead silence whenever he spoke. In politics he was a Radical of the old school, and there were few stronger opponents of Socialism in England. But he had written an *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*, and for selling an American pamphlet on checks to over-population a Middlesex jury had found him guilty of what the law called an obscene libel. He was, therefore, on moral as well as religious grounds, obnoxious to men who knew nothing of him except his public career.[1] 1880.

The debates on Mr. Bradlaugh's case revealed the existence, and stimulated the activity, of a new Parliamentary group. Lord Randolph Churchill, younger son of the Duke of Marlborough, and Member for the family borough of Woodstock; Sir Drummond Wolff, who had been Commissioner in Eastern Roumelia under the Treaty of Berlin; and Mr. Gorst, Member for Chatham, an able lawyer without much practice, who before his election had been political agent to the Conservatives, formed themselves into a close confederacy. Loyal to Lord Beaconsfield, they distrusted the prudent moderation of their nominal Leader in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote, whom they treated much as Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar had treated Mr. Butt. They received occasional The Fourth Party.

[1] His conviction had been set aside for technical reasons, which did not affect the merits of the case. It added to his offence in many people's eyes that a lady, Mrs. Besant, had co-operated, and been convicted, with him. But the jury had expressed an opinion that their motives were honest and innocent.

1880. assistance, which became gradually more frequent, from Mr. Arthur Balfour, Lord Salisbury's nephew, a brilliant philosophic pamphleteer, who had sat for the borough of Hertford since 1874. Known as the Fourth Party, the Irish Home Rulers being the third, they exercised a great and growing influence upon the counsels of the Opposition. They were all clever men. But the cleverest among them, and their real leader, was Lord Randolph Churchill.

Mr. Parnell. The new Leader of the Third Party was Charles Stewart Parnell, who took the place of Mr. Shaw, deposed for want of pugnacity, not for any lack of shrewdness or discretion. Few such extraordinary men as Mr. Parnell have sat in the House of Commons. To rhetoric he made no pretence. Devoid of the vivacity and the fire which distinguished the Irish race, without eloquence or humour, he said with rigid conciseness exactly what he meant, or at least what he meant to say. Conciliation and menace were equally wasted on him. He had no desire to please the House, and he was not afraid of it. The Irish people in Ireland and in the United States were the audience to whom he really appealed. His ascendency over his followers was so complete that they would do as he told them without asking for any reason at all. Moderate Home Rulers disliked him, and still adhered to Mr. Shaw. But he had behind him a band of some five-and-thirty men with whom his will was law. Only a very few of them were admitted to his confidence. The rest admired and obeyed a chief who did not seek their company, and did not share their religion. He was their master, and they felt that he would lead them to victory as no other leader could. Mr. Parnell's policy involved absolute independence of British combinations,

and early in the summer an unfortunate incident encouraged the idea that in a British House of Commons Ireland could not expect fair play. M. Léon Say, the distinguished economist, who represented the French Republic at St. James's, was recalled to preside over the Senate, and his place was taken by M. Challemel-Lacour, who had made himself obnoxious to the Ultramontane faction in the Church of Rome.[1] An Irish Member, himself an Ultramontane Catholic, put a question to the Foreign Office which reflected injuriously upon the character of the new Ambassador. Inasmuch as the Government were not in any way responsible for the appointment of M. Challemel-Lacour, the Speaker might well have ruled the question out of order. It was, however, put, and Sir Charles Dilke categorically denied all the allegations contained in it. Thereupon the Member who put it, acting within his strict Parliamentary right, moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of repeating and amplifying his charges. His conduct was thoroughly perverse, and an abuse of his position. But he could do no harm to M. Challemel-Lacour, a man even more eminent in letters than in politics, and the motion would probably have fallen through for want of a seconder. Unfortunately Mr. Gladstone, yielding to a natural impulse of indignation, moved that he be not heard, and the Speaker put the question, though admitting that there had been no precedent for two hundred years. That the rest of the sitting was wasted in a futile wrangle over a point which provoked unlimited debate was a small matter. It was far more serious, and infinitely

1880.

The case of Challemel-Lacour.

June 14.

[1] He was alleged to have ordered the massacre of some volunteers in the Gironde during the war, using the words *Fusillez-moi ces gens-la*. But the story was a fable, and he had for several years been Minister of the French Republic to the Swiss Confederation at Berne.

1880. mischievous, to give Irishmen an opportunity of saying that between them and the Government there was no impartial authority in the House of Commons.[1]

Although the second and operative session of 1880 did not begin until May was far advanced, and closed early in September, a good deal of solid work had been done when Parliament was prorogued. The Budget was not expected to contain anything new. But Mr. Gladstone had a surprise in store, and repealed the Malt Tax. The Conservatives, who had always called themselves the farmer's friends, did not know which way to look. Their most conspicuous opponent, the enemy of the landed interest, the author of all political evil, was taking the bread out of their mouths. No sooner had a Conservative Government resigned after six years' tenure of power than their Liberal successors removed the great agricultural grievance, which they had not touched with one of their fingers. That it was a sham grievance, inasmuch as the Malt Tax had been paid, not by the growers of barley but by the drinkers of beer, they were debarred by their previous speeches from saying. They could only acquiesce, with the best grace they were able to assume, when Mr. Gladstone completed the "freedom of the mash-tub" by substituting for the Malt Tax a duty of six shillings on each barrel of beer, and grumble at the extra penny on the Income Tax, bringing it up from fivepence to sixpence, which the initial cost of the change required. Popular as the Budget was, a Bill passed by Sir William Harcourt proved more popular still. Reform or abolition of the Game Laws had long been a plank in the Liberal platform. The Home Secretary, however, approached the question from the farmer's rather than

June 10. Repeal of the Malt Tax.

The Ground Game Act.

[1] *Lord Acton's Letters*, p. 21.

the poacher's point of view. His object was to protect growing crops from the ravages of hares and rabbits, which were preserved for sporting purposes without regard for the feelings or pockets of the tenants. The Bill, therefore, simply provided that occupiers of land, all contracts notwithstanding, should have, equally with their landlords, the right to kill and take ground game. Poaching remained an offence, and poaching in gangs by night a felony. The Bill was one for the benefit of the tenant farmers, and of them alone. But they were satisfied by Sir William Harcourt's concessions, to which a few Whigs, led by Mr. Henry Brand, the Speaker's son, strenuously objected, and very little more was heard of the Game Laws after it had passed. The professional poacher from London did not excite much sympathy among agricultural labourers. The Employers' Liability Bill, introduced by Mr. Dodson, was an ingenious compromise. Since 1837, when the Court of Exchequer, through Lord Abinger, decided Priestley *v.* Fowler, it had been held by the Courts that, though a master was liable to strangers for the negligence of his servants, he was not liable to those servants themselves except for his own. If, for instance, an explosion in a mine, which was due to the carelessness of a miner, injured persons living near the pit's mouth, they could recover damages from the mine-owner. But the other miners, or their families if they were killed, would be prevented from suing by Lord Abinger's doctrine of common employment. The Trade Unions pressed for the simple removal of this restriction, but that was further than Ministers were prepared to go. They would only propose that the employer should be liable for superintendents or foremen, "to whose orders the workmen were bound to conform." Even this was too much for many of the masters, and Mr. Knowles,

1880.

Employers' Liability Act.

1880. Conservative Member for Wigan, suggested as an alternative a joint scheme of insurance, to which employed and employers should equally contribute. Mr. Chamberlain, however, attacked this scheme as merely disguised obstruction, and succeeded in defeating it by a majority of two to one. The Bill thereupon passed, and softened the effects of a grievance it did not remove. The Burials Bill, on the other hand, finally settled a painful and undignified dispute by permitting interments in parish churchyards either without any religious ceremony, or with such Christian and orderly service as those in charge of the funeral might think fit. Many were the prophecies of evil which this tardy measure of justice called forth. No one of them has been fulfilled. Dissenters have not asked to take possession of the churches, nor have secularists demanded the right of denouncing Christianity by the graves of their friends. Bad logic the Bill may have been. But it was good sense, and it closed a controversy which had been open far too long.

The Burials Act.

Compulsory education. During this short and crowded session an Education Bill was passed, almost without debate, which showed how great had been the advance of public opinion since 1870. The system of universal compulsion, which Mr. Forster had vainly recommended to the Cabinet in that year, was now adopted with general acquiescence by Lord Spencer and Mr. Mundella. "It shall be the duty of the local authority," so ran the new Act, "of every school district in which by-laws respecting the attendance of children at school are not in force, forthwith to make by-laws for such district."[1] That was all, and it was enough. Mr. Mundella, the new Vice-President of the Council, was a zealot in the cause of education. The son of an Italian refugee, he had raised himself by his own energy

[1] 43 & 44 Vict. c. 23, s. 2.

from the workshop to the Treasury Bench, and he was laudably anxious that others should be provided with the training which he had had to provide for himself. Mr. Mundella shares with Mr. Forster the credit of bringing into school the children of the labouring poor. 1880.

Not less important to the working classes than this supplementary Education Act was the official encouragement of thrift by the new Postmaster-General. Mr. Fawcett had been urged both in and out of Parliament to accept small deposits below the fixed limit of a shilling for the Post Office Savings Banks. To this proposal the Treasury objected on economic grounds. But Mr. Fawcett, the most practical of Ministers, was not easily baffled. He issued blank slips, to which penny stamps could be fixed one by one until there were twelve, when the nearest Post Office could legally receive them as an investment. The success of this experiment was so great that by the end of the financial year more than half-a-million slips had been received, and more than two hundred new accounts had in consequence been opened. The increase steadily continued, and even children were tempted by such simple means to invest in large numbers their little savings.[1] Much as constitutional jealousy has limited the powers of an English Minister, there are some important things which he can do without applying to Parliament, and Fawcett's successful career at the Post Office could not have begun better than with this admirable stroke off his own bat. Small investments. Nov. 15.

Before the rising of Parliament the political horizon was clouded by the serious illness of the Prime Minister. On the 2nd of August, while the Lords were debating the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, he was pronounced to be suffering

[1] Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, pp. 431–432.

1880. from fever, with congestion of the left lung, and at the age of seventy such attacks are apt to be serious. But Mr. Gladstone's constitution was not like other men's, and by the 28th of August, when he ought to have been taking a holiday, he was back on the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons. He had not been able, with all his authority, to hold the House completely in. Sir
June 18. Wilfrid Lawson had carried against him, by a barren vote, a resolution that trade in liquor should be controlled by the ratepayers. He had failed, though supported by Sir Stafford Northcote, to prevent an expression of opinion that a monument
July 16. should not, as Dean Stanley unwisely proposed, be set up in Westminster Abbey to the son of Louis Napoleon. Although he did not resist, he could not, as a Minister, support a proposition that it was the duty of himself and his colleagues to recommend a reduction of foreign armaments. But what most severely strained the allegiance of his followers was his omission to recall Sir Bartle Frere. Sir Bartle was erroneously believed by many Liberals to be responsible for the annexation of the Transvaal, which had been accomplished by Sir Theophilus Shepstone before he reached South Africa, and he was the undoubted author of the Zulu War, whose real justification in necessity was not appreciated by either political party at home. The Queen was strong on the Governor's
May 28. side, and the Prime Minister assured Her Majesty that he would do his best to repress the movement among his followers for recall until Sir Bartle Frere had had an opportunity of making progress with confederation.[1] Mr. Gladstone's task was a difficult one. Some members of his Cabinet were restive at his forbearance, and outside the Government a group of Radicals, headed by Mr. Courtney,

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 23.

drew up a Memorandum of protest against Sir Bartle's continuance in office.[1] Mr. Gladstone, however, adhered to his determination, and waited for the decision of the Cape Parliament. It was not long in doubt. Mr. Sprigg[2] duly proposed his Resolutions for a Conference of Delegates from Cape Colony, Natal, Griqualand West, and the Transvaal. But that most practical politician saw at once that he could not succeed. Whatever chance Confederation might have had before the Transvaal was annexed, it had none now. The assent of the Dutch in Cape Colony, without which it was impossible to proceed, would never be given to any policy of which their friends and kinsmen beyond the Vaal disapproved. Sir Owen Lanyon was the last man to conciliate the Boers, who were bent on the recovery of their independence rather than on joining a Federal Union. Mr. Sprigg did not press his Resolutions, and after a debate of four days they were withdrawn. Thereupon the Cabinet came to the conclusion that the retention of Sir Bartle Frere could no longer serve any useful purpose, and he was recalled. Lord Kimberley, in his telegraphic despatch, alluded to the divergence of views between the Governor and the Ministry without specifying wherein it consisted, and frankly acknowledged that the failure of Confederation was not due to any want of earnestness or ability on the Governor's part. But as the "special reason" for which Sir Bartle Frere had originally been appointed by Lord Carnarvon no longer existed, it was not desirable to retain him. Lord Kimberley was never distinguished for tact, and his language was by no means well chosen. Sir Bartle Frere had in truth good ground of complaint against both the Governments he served. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach

1880. June 3.

Recall of Sir Bartle Frere. July 29.

[1] Martineau's *Life of Frere*, ii. 391.
[2] Afterwards Sir Gordon Sprigg.

1880. would neither brave the unpopularity of defending the Zulu War, nor incur the responsibility of removing its author. Lord Kimberley contrived to give the impression that he merely waited for the failure of Confederation as a plausible excuse. Sir Bartle Frere declined to follow Lord Lytton's example, and treat his office as a political one. He did his duty so long as he was allowed to do it, in spite of criticism, and even abuse. But Mr. Gladstone himself could not have held out much longer against a pressure which had been rather strengthened than weakened by the decision of the Cabinet to keep possession of the Transvaal.

Aug. 20. English obstruction.

During Mr. Gladstone's enforced absence from the House Lord Hartington led it with unexpected vigour, and his attack upon organised obstruction was not less agreeable to his followers because he showed by statistics that three Members of the Fourth Party, Mr. Gorst at their head, had each made more speeches, and asked more questions, than any Irishman, even Mr. Biggar himself. These tests, applied to individuals, are fallible and imperfect. But Lord Hartington's examples were sufficiently numerous and well chosen to prove the existence of a design for impeding business among English as well as Irish Members.

Before Parliament was prorogued the Government had received bad news from Afghanistan, and Kandahar had been rescued from imminent danger by a forced march of ten thousand men over a distance of three hundred miles. In the month of June Ayub Khan, younger son of the late Sher Ali, left Herat for Kandahar, then held by General Primrose. On the 1st of July General Burrows was despatched from Kandahar to meet him, and prevent him from crossing the river Helmund. But the failure of General Burrows was complete and disastrous. His force was outflanked by a superior

number of Afghans at Maiwand; his artillery exhausted their ammunition; his troops were utterly routed, and they only escaped annihilation because the Afghans were too weak, or too careless, to follow them. "No such indisputable victory over British forces in the open field," says Sir Alfred Lyall, "had been gained by an Asiatic leader in all our long Indian wars." The immediate result was the investment of Kandahar by Ayub Khan, and the relief of the city became a most urgent matter. Sir Frederick Roberts at once proposed, with the assent of Sir Donald Stewart, to undertake the task, and Lord Ripon sent his approval by telegraph from Simla. Sir Donald Stewart himself evacuated Kabul, which was occupied by Abdur Rahman, and Sir Frederick Roberts, with ten thousand men carefully picked for the purpose, started for Kandahar. For three weeks nothing was heard of them, or of him, and great was the anxiety at home. But the arrangements were so perfect that no mishap occurred, and on the last day of August General Primrose was relieved. Reinforced by Primrose's garrison, Roberts had little difficulty in defeating Ayub and dispersing his army. The whole of the Afghan artillery fell into the hands of the British General, and the Afghan War was at an end. "It can easily be imagined," says the hero of this brilliant achievement, "with what an intense sense of relief I awoke on the morning of the 2nd of September — the march had ended, Kandahar had been relieved, Ayub Khan's army had been beaten and dispersed, and there was an adequate force in Southern Afghanistan to prevent further disturbances." [1]

1880.

The battle of Maiwand. July 27.

Roberts's march to Kandahar.

Aug. 9.

Lord Hartington and the Cabinet had now to consider what was to be done with Kandahar. There was no precipitation in reversing the policy

[1] Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*, ii. 376.

1880. of Lord Lytton. To recall the past, said the old Greek poet, is beyond the power even of Omnipotence itself. For good or for evil, Afghanistan had been invaded, and the hostility of the tribes which inhabited it ensured. But the Afridis were willing, for a subsidy, to patrol the Khyber Pass and keep it open. Abdur Rahman, who was installed at Kabul, claimed the territories of Dost Mohammed, which of course included Kandahar. He did not ask for help, being quite able, as the event proved, to take care of himself. He wanted to be let alone. It was Lord Lytton who first recognised him, and with his selection it was not proposed to interfere. A strong and independent Afghanistan was incompatible with Lord Lytton's policy of splitting the country up, so that unfriendliness might be balanced by weakness. Lord Ripon was in no hurry to act. His Council, especially Sir Frederick Haines, the Commander-in-Chief, and Sir John Strachey, the Financial Member, were committed to the views of his predecessor. Before the end of the year, however, their respective places were taken by Sir Donald Stewart and Major Baring, who both supported the evacuation of Kandahar. Although they abstained from pressing their own Viceroy, and embarrassing him in the choice of means, the new Ministers made up their minds at the earliest moment that this part of their predecessor's policy must be reversed. On the 21st of May, in a despatch kept secret at the time, Lord Hartington informed Lord Ripon, who must have known it well enough when he went out, that "the speedy withdrawal of the greater part of the troops now engaged in Afghanistan, and the ultimate withdrawal of the whole from positions beyond our own frontier," was the cardinal object of the Government. The "scientific frontier" was consigned to limbo; Kandahar was declared

Evacuation of Kandahar.

essential to the strength, as well as to the unity, 1880.
of Afghanistan, which would also include Herat; Lord Ripon was instructed to give Abdur Rahman the same conditional assurances as Lord Northbrook had given Sher Ali; and a native, not a British envoy, would, as before, be established at Kabul. The final determination of the Cabinet was expressed by Lord Hartington on the 11th of November after the relief of Kandahar and defeat of Ayub Khan by Sir Frederick Roberts. "Recent experience," said the Secretary of State, "has done nothing to strengthen the arguments of those who desire, as a military measure, to advance the Indian frontier, and much to verify the forebodings of those who are opposed to that policy." The Cabinet did not believe in the alleged danger from Russia; they saw no reason for retaining Kandahar which would not equally apply to the occupation of Herat; they regarded the whole policy of interference with the affairs of Afghanistan as a mistake; they considered annexation as unfavourable to the loyalty of the native princes; and they did not regard the cost of it to the Indian Exchequer as a justifiable expense. In short, they gave effect to the verdict of the country, which had pronounced against the Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton.

A more difficult task was to carry out the unfulfilled clauses in the Treaty of Berlin. An addition of territory was still due to Montenegro. Greece had obtained nothing at all. The condition of Armenia was in no way improved. All these points Mr. Goschen was instructed to impress upon the mind of the Sultan, while Lord Granville attempted to employ the Concert of Europe in coercing the Porte. But the Concert of Europe proved very difficult to manage, and it was necessary, for the avoidance of discord, to proceed with

1880. extreme caution. The claims of Greece were submitted to a Conference of the Powers, held at Berlin, from which both Greece and Turkey were excluded. The Conference elected Prince Hohenlohe as its President, and sat from the middle of June to the beginning of July, when it separated after recommending that Thessaly and Epirus should be ceded by the Porte to the Hellenic Kingdom. As Turkey refused compliance, the King of Greece delivered a warlike speech to his Chamber, and Tricoupis, his Premier, being disinclined for extreme measures, was compelled to retire in favour of Coumoundouros. But the Powers did nothing further at the time, and peace was not actually broken. Armenia seemed under the Anglo-Turkish Agreement to be the affair rather of England than of Europe. There remained Montenegro, an especial favourite with Mr. Gladstone, and on this point the strongest possible pressure was brought to bear upon Abdul Hamid. As Turkey objected to the exact terms of the Montenegrin clauses on the ground that the districts there specified were inhabited by Mohammedans and under the protection of the Albanian League, the district of Dulcigno was suggested as an alternative by the Ambassadors of the great Powers at Constantinople. Even the patience of the European Concert, more severely tried by action than by delay, was at length exhausted, and Lord Granville's proposal of a naval demonstration off the Albanian coast was accepted by the other Powers. The fleet assembled at Gravosa under a British admiral, Sir Beauchamp Seymour,[1] and remained there, inasmuch as the crews were by international arrangement prohibited from landing. This performance seemed absurdly futile, and excited a good deal of irreverent laughter. But Mr.

The Berlin Conference.

Oct. 21.

June 29.

Sept. 14.

[1] Afterwards Lord Alcester.

Gladstone was, as usual, in earnest, and proposed through Lord Granville that the European fleet should sequester the customs dues at Smyrna until the Sultan gave way. Russia and Italy assented to this proposal; France hesitated, being more concerned for Greece than for Montenegro; Germany and Austria were hostile. By a strange and happy chance the Sultan heard what England had advised, not what Europe had answered, with the result that he suddenly conceded Dulcigno, and Dervish Pasha formally surrendered the district to the Prince of the Black Mountain. The fleet dispersed on the 5th of December, the Porte having, as Mr. Gladstone said, yielded "not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Great Britain had asked Europe to coerce."

1880.

The surrender of Dulcigno.

Oct. 12.

Nov. 25.

A country nearer than Montenegro, and not amenable to the Concert of Europe, was meanwhile taxing and exhausting the resources of the Government. Ireland could not complain that her interests were neglected by the Government or by the House. The Queen's Speech indeed promised no Irish legislation, though it announced that the Act of 1875 "in abridgment of liberty," which expired on the 1st of June, would not be renewed. To adverse criticisms upon this policy there was the obvious retort that Lord Beaconsfield might have renewed the Act before dissolving Parliament. The complaints of Irish Members that nothing definite was said about Irish land were less easy to answer. So dire was the distress in that country that Mr. Forster found it necessary to extend the statute passed by his predecessors, and to grant another three-quarters of a million from the surplus of the Irish Church for loans to landlords, out-door relief, and fishery piers. This Bill met with no opposition, and passed without difficulty. But it did not satisfy the Land League, nor deal with the

May 20.

1880. rapid increase of evictions which threatened social order in Ireland. The statistics were alarming. For the five years which ended in 1877 the average number of these processes in each year was five hundred. In 1878 it exceeded seven hundred. In 1879 it was a thousand; and the first half of 1880 exceeded the whole year 1879. So far as appearances could be trusted, the landlords were taking advantage of hard times to clear their estates. The great security against capricious eviction was compensation for disturbance. But the Land Act of 1870 gave no compensation when rent was not paid, unless the Court considered the rent "exorbitant." The Act made no allowance for cases of hardship resulting from bad times, and those were the very cases with which the Government had now to deal. The Chief Secretary at first resisted Irish pressure, pleading that to interfere with the right of eviction would make the payment of all rent arbitrary and capricious. At last, however, he yielded, and promised that the Bill for the Relief of Distress should contain a new clause enlarging the discretionary power of the County Court Judge in granting compensation. This clause became the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, and occupied the time of the House for a large part of the session. Conservative resistance to it was led by Mr. Chaplin, who described it succinctly as sheer confiscation. Mr. Forster defended it as temporary, required by the circumstances of southern and western Ireland, and needed to complete the recognition by the Land Act of the tenant's property in the soil. The operation of the measure would be restricted to the present and the next ensuing year; the tenant's inability to pay must be the consequence of bad harvests alone; and he must be willing to hold his farm on "just and reasonable terms," which the

June 15. Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

June 25.

landlord refused. Under those conditions, and those conditions only, he would be entitled to damages if he were turned out. Twenty Liberals, headed by Lord Grey's nephew and heir, voted against this Bill. Fifty more abstained from voting. Nevertheless, the second reading was carried by 295 against 217. Mr. Parnell, and his immediate following, held aloof, being dissatisfied with the narrow scope of the Bill. A new Member of the House, who afterwards attained great distinction, Mr. Henry Fowler, tersely and accurately described it as affirming "that landlords ought not to take advantage of exceptional circumstances of distress to interfere with property which legitimately belonged to the tenants under the Land Act of 1870." This, however, was not the view that commended itself to the House of Lords, which did summary execution upon the Bill as infringing the sacred rights of property. Lord Lansdowne resigned his office as Under-Secretary for India to attack the Bill, and made the best speech against it. The Lord Chancellor[1] was subtle and eloquent in vain. Only 51 Peers in a House of 333 could be found to vote for a measure which the Queen's Government pronounced essential to the welfare of Ireland. It was observed that the Bill would have been defeated if no Conservatives had taken part in the division. A power of suspensory veto is implied in the mere existence of a second chamber. But the vote of the Lords on this temporary Bill was of course final, and deprived the Irish Executive of a powerful weapon against disorder.[2] Great was Mr. Forster's anger, which

1880.

Aug. 3.

Its rejection by the Lords.

[1] Lord Selborne.

[2] "The Bill," said Mr. Chamberlain, "is rejected, the civil war has begun. Class is arranged against class in social strife, and now 30,000 soldiers and 12,000 policemen are barely sufficient to enable the Government to protect the lives and the property of the Queen's subjects in Ireland."

1880. did not, however, break out till, on the 1st of September, the Lords rejected a just and harmless Registration Bill for Ireland. "We," he exclaimed, "are the representatives of the people, and the power which the Lords have is simply owing to an accident of birth." This may be called Radical claptrap. But Mr. Forster was on the firm ground of fact when he compared, at the close of an exhausting session, the laborious industry of the Commons with the idleness of men who had avowedly thrown out a Bill because it came before them at a time inconvenient to themselves.

Before the Compensation Bill was rejected the Government had taken on their own authority a step towards the settlement of the agrarian problem in Ireland. Although a Royal Commission, appointed in 1879, was still sitting to investigate the Land Laws of the United Kingdom, another Commission, composed exclusively of Irishmen, was nominated, to consider the Land Act of 1870 in its effect upon the relations of Irish landlords with their tenants, and upon the purchase by occupiers of their holdings. The new Commissioners were a Liberal Peer, the Earl of Bessborough; an Irish Judge, Baron Dowse; a Liberal landlord, The O'Conor Don; a Conservative landlord, Mr. Kavanagh; and Mr. Shaw, the head of the moderate Home Rulers. They had power to take evidence in all parts of Ireland, and they commenced their sittings in Dublin on the 1st of September.

July 29.

The Bessborough Commission.

Lord Beaconsfield's warning about the state of Ireland before the General Election had been treated with disdain by Mr. Gladstone, and with indifference by the public. Events, to which he himself, by procuring the rejection of the Disturbance Bill, contributed, were not long in justifying his prescience or his knowledge. The fatal vote by the Lords was followed by increased activity of

the Land League, and by outrages of the gravest kind. One was mysterious, and has never to this day been explained. On the 25th of September the body of Lord Mountmorres, pierced by six bullets, was found on the road at Rusheen, near Ballinrobe in County Galway. So great was the abhorrence, not of the crime but of the victim, that the owner of the nearest house would not admit the body, no hearse could be hired for conveying it to the grave, and the family had to take refuge in England, where the Queen gave them rooms at Hampton Court. Lord Mountmorres was a poor man with a small estate, who could not afford to reduce his rents. But he was not shown to have evicted any one, and the peculiar animosity of his neighbours was thought to imply that they suspected him of giving information to the Government. A reward of a thousand pounds promised by the Lord Lieutenant failed to elicit any particle of evidence against the unknown murderers. Meanwhile the Land League, which was rapidly becoming the real Government of Ireland, had discovered a method of tyranny more effective than outrages. Mr. Parnell, who, if not the founder of the League, was its most powerful member, had explained the new policy in a speech at Ennis, which may be quoted as the classical passage on the subject. "What are you to do," he asked, "to a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted?" "Kill him, shoot him," cried the audience. Parnell replied, with cold intensity, that he could point out to them a more excellent way, which he did not shrink from calling Christian. "When a man takes a farm," he said, "from which another has been evicted, you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop

1880.

Murder of Lord Mountmorres.

Sept. 19.

Policy of the Land League.

1880. counter, you must show him in the fair and in the market-place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a moral Coventry, by isolating him from his kind as if he was a leper of old — you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed, and you may depend upon it that there will be no man so full of avarice, so lost to shame, as to dare the public opinion of all right-thinking men and to transgress your unwritten code of laws."[1] Repulsive as the cold malignity of this passage is, the social ostracism preached by Parnell did in some degree tend to substitute moral for physical force. Its efficacy was soon tested in a striking way, which added a new word to the language.

The origin of boycotting. Lord Erne's English agent in County Mayo, Captain Boycott, refused to accept what the tenants offered as a fair rent, and took out processes of ejectment against them. The process-

Sept. 22. server was driven back to his employer's house, and Captain Boycott's servants were called out, as if there had been a strike. He had no labourers on his farm and no grooms in his stables. The local tradesmen would not deal with him, and there was no one to gather his crops. These were at last reaped by a detachment of fifty Orangemen from Ulster protected by police; and when they left the place, Captain Boycott, of immortal memory, left it with them. Law and order triumphed in a sense. But the civilisation which required to be so maintained was fundamentally defective. The murder of Lord Mountmorres and the persecution of Captain Boycott fixed the eyes of England upon the sister country. Unfortu-

Agrarian crimes. nately these incidents did not stand alone. Mr. Hutchinson, a landlord living near Skibbereen in County Cork, was shot at on his way home

[1] Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, vol. i. pp. 236–237.

after collecting his rents, and though he himself escaped by accident, the driver of his car was killed. Two men were in custody on a charge of wounding another landlord, Mr. Boyd of New Ross in Waterford, and killing his nephew. Evictions could only be carried out by armed force. Process-servers went in constant peril of their lives. Tenants were warned not to pay a rent which was in excess of Griffith's valuation, made between 1852 and 1868 by Sir Richard Griffith, Chairman of the Board of Works. Bailiffs and land agents received threatening letters, or found graves dug before their doors. To take a farm from which the tenant had been evicted required courage and endurance of no ordinary kind. The evicted men were forcibly put back, and caretakers were maltreated by bands of masked men. There arose a loud cry for the old remedy of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. More than a hundred landowners with their agents met in Dublin, and sent a deputation to the Castle demanding the protection of the Government. Evictions and outrages increased side by side. In the west of Ireland people were starving, and hunger is an evil counsellor. "Bands of peasants scoured the country, firing into the houses of obnoxious individuals."[1] The House of Lords had incurred a terrible responsibility by rejecting the Bill which would have stayed injustice at a time of distress. But their selfish and short-sighted action could not relieve the Government from the duty of coping with a reign of terror. Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were fiercely denounced for moral complicity with the outrages they did not prevent. Public indignation was especially excited on this side of St. George's Channel by the cruel houghing and maiming of cattle which were found on sur-

1880. Oct. 16. Oct. 7. Cattle-maiming.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 247.

1880. rendered farms. Nothing did more than this abominable practice to set the whole public opinion of Great Britain against Mr. Parnell and the Land League, who were held accountable for it all.

Earl Cowper, the Lord Lieutenant, was a sincere, though moderate, Liberal, and an hereditary Whig. He was reluctant to propose coercive measures, and in a Memorandum to the Cabinet he expressed with precision the grounds on which alone such a policy can be justified. "For the ordinary law to be sufficient to repress crime," he wrote, "it is necessary that the majority of the population be on the side of the injured person, and in the disturbed parts of Ireland the vast majority are, in cases of an agrarian nature, invariably on the side of the criminal." This is perfectly true so far as it goes. What Lord Cowper failed to see was that the morbid sympathy with criminals arose from hatred of injustice, not from love of crime; and that if the law in Ireland, like the law in England, had been in accordance with public opinion, there would be no agrarian murders, no boycotting, no failure to get convictions on proper evidence. He was pressed to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act by every agent, every landlord, every magistrate. He in his turn put pressure upon Mr. Gladstone, who was himself opposed to departure from the ordinary law, as in a still higher degree were Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain. The Cabinet determined to test the value of trial by jury, and an information was filed in the Crown Office against the chiefs of the Land League for conspiring to prevent the payment of rent, resist the process of eviction, and obstruct the letting of surrendered farms. There were fourteen defendants, of whom five were Members of Parliament. But Mr. Parnell was so much the most important that the

Lord Cowper's advice.

Nov. 2.

Prosecution of Parnell.

others may be left out of account. It was a question whether he or Mr. Forster should govern Ireland. This is no disparagement of Lord Cowper. When the Chief Secretary is in the Cabinet and the Lord Lieutenant is not, their legal relations are reversed, and the nominal subordinate becomes the actual master. Mr. Forster, representing the principle of authority, and Mr. Parnell, representing the spirit of Nationalism, were inevitably drawn into single combat. The imminence of criminal proceedings, which could not be taken without delay, had no effect in repressing disorder or intimidating the Land League. Ten days after the public announcement of the prosecution Lord Cowper wrote to Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Forster being in London, "I am more convinced every day and every hour of the necessity of suspending the Habeas Corpus Act and having an Arms Bill." Ten days afterwards he intimated that he must resign in January if his request for further powers were not granted.[1] He believed that a general massacre of landlords was not impossible. The heads of the police persuaded Forster that they could lay their hands at once upon the men really responsible for outrage, if only they were allowed to act without the tiresome formality of proof. At the Lord Mayor's dinner Mr. Gladstone acknowledged that the duty of enforcing the law took precedence of every other, and on the same occasion the Lord Chancellor,[2] as became his office, spoke even more impressively to the same effect. "I feel very strongly," wrote Lord Cowper a month later, "that Parliament ought to be called together without delay." The Cabinet yielded at last to the urgency of Mr. Forster, and two days after Christmas, the day before the trial of the Land Leaguers

1880.

Nov. 23.

Nov. 9.

Dec. 12.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, pp. 258–260.
[2] Lord Selborne.

1880. began in Dublin, it was announced that Parliament would meet on the 6th of January. The conduct of Ministers was hard to defend. They had appealed to the law, and they would not wait for the law to take its course. It was universally assumed that a Bill for the suspension of personal freedom in Ireland would be the first business of the new year.

Early meeting of Parliament.

1881. The trial in Dublin was actually proceeding when Parliament met. Those Members of the House of Commons who were also defendants preferred Westminster to the Four Courts; and as the case was a misdemeanour, not a felony, the Judges were able to go on without them. But the disdain thus shown for constituted authority was unfavourable to the cause of law and order. The Queen's Speech contained the anticipated announcement that additional powers were required by the Irish Government for the protection of life and property. Mr. Forster had triumphed. Mr. Gladstone, who had held out as long as he could, found "to his dismay" that even Bright and Chamberlain preferred suspension of Habeas Corpus to the more stringent forms of penal law accompanied by regular trial which he himself would rather have proposed.[1] Forster had been persuaded that outrages were the work of a few men known to the police, and that if he could clap these men in prison, all would be well. The Parnellites accepted the Queen's Speech as a declaration of war, and determined to exhaust the forms of the House in opposing the Chief Secretary's designs. They cared nothing for the House of Commons or for the English people. Their tactics were revolutionary, and they were as much bent upon breaking Parliament as Charles I. himself. Although there were not forty of them, all told, their discipline

Coercion threatened.

Resistance of the Parnellites.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 50.

was perfect, and their obedience to Mr. Parnell was absolute. Most of them were young men who were rather amused than fatigued by sitting up all night, and they knew that the more disagreeable they made themselves to the Government the safer would be their seats. Whatever might be the case for the British Government, there was a case for the Irish people too, and it had been brought before the public by a disinterested witness who feared God rather than man. Colonel Gordon, known as "Chinese" Gordon since with his "ever-victorious army" he had put down the Taeping rebellion in China, visited the west of Ireland, and communicated his impressions to the *Times*. He pronounced the population to be worse off than the inhabitants of China, almost starved, and living in places where Englishmen would not keep cattle. "I believe," he added, "these people are made as we are; that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but broken-spirited and desperate." [1] The wisdom of Gordon's suggestion that the State should buy up eleven counties may be doubted. He did not pretend to be a statesman or a man of the world. But he was just, fearless, and a sincere Christian, with no motive except by speaking the truth to convince his countrymen of their duty towards Ireland.

1881.

Gordon's letter.

Although Mr. Forster gave notice on the first night of the session that he would introduce at the earliest possible moment Bills for the protection of life and property in Ireland, and the Prime Minister that he would ask for them precedence over all other business, the debate on the Address was prolonged for eleven days, chiefly by Irish Members. The principal struggle occurred on Mr. Parnell's amendment against the suspension of constitutional rights in Ireland. The Con-

Debate on the Address.

[1] *Times*, 3rd of December 1880.

1881. servatives voted with the Government, and Mr. Parnell was defeated by a majority of 435 to 57. Eight English Members supported him. Mr. Bradlaugh, acting on a principle that formed no part of his creed, voted with those who voted against him, and Mr. Jacob Bright separated himself from a Government to which his brother belonged. The other English names in this brief list were Arthur Arnold,[1] Thomas Burt, Joseph Cowen, Jesse Collings, Henry Labouchere, and Thomas Charles Thompson. When the Address

Jan. 20. had at length been voted, the way was clear for Mr. Forster. But in the meantime two Reports, or rather the Reports of two Commissions, had been

Report of the Bessborough Commission. laid before Parliament. Lord Bessborough's Commission on Irish Land, which sat in Dublin on the 1st of September, at Belfast on the 21st, and in outlying districts during the autumn, recommended by four to one, Mr. Kavanagh dissenting, the three principles, sometimes called the three F's, fixity of tenure, fair rent, and free sale. This was the public platform of the Land League, and its adoption by four Royal Commissioners, including a Judge,[2] made of necessity a marked effect upon public opinion. "A thorough and very general change in the system of land tenure," Lord Bessborough wrote, "seems imperatively required."[3] He added the memorable words that "freedom of contract, in the case of the majority of Irish tenants, large and small, does not really exist."[4] The Land Act of 1870, the majority of the Commissioners found, afforded no protection to the tenant who remained in his holding. He could only claim compensation when he gave it up. Notwithstanding the disturbed state of the country, and the alleged lawlessness of the people, the Commissioners had no

[1] Afterwards Sir Arthur Arnold.
[2] Mr. Baron Dowse.
[3] *Report*, p. 18.
[4] *Id.* p. 21.

difficulty in obtaining evidence, and were struck with the reasonableness of the tenants' claims. This Report did not stand alone. Ireland had become the topic of the day, and the Duke of Richmond's Commission were determined not to be superseded. They produced a preliminary document which dealt with Ireland alone, and here again the League had reason for satisfaction. For while the Dukes of Richmond and Buccleuch, with the majority of their colleagues, had nothing better than emigration to recommend, Lord Carlingford, who knew more about the subject than all the other Commissioners put together, carried a considerable minority with him in recommending the three F's, which Sir Stafford Northcote had rather imprudently denounced as fraud, force, and folly. The conclusion that freedom of contract did not, at least between landlord and tenant, exist in Ireland was stated by Lord Carlingford almost as emphatically as by Lord Bessborough. On the very day that Mr. Forster introduced his Bill the State Trials at Dublin came to an end with the disagreement of the jury. Although Mr. Justice Fitzgerald pronounced from the Bench that the Land League was an illegal conspiracy, there were only two jurors for a conviction, and the foreman epigrammatically observed, "We are unanimous that we can't agree." They played into Mr. Forster's hands. If they had found the defendants guilty, he could hardly have gone on with his Bill.

1881.

And of the Richmond Commission.

Jan. 24. Futility of the State trial.

The gist of his first measure, his Bill for the Protection of Person and Property, was severely simple. It enabled in law the Lord Lieutenant, and in fact himself, to lock up any Irishman, and to keep him in gaol till the end of September 1882. In aid of this scarcely Liberal measure the Chief Secretary produced the customary statistics.

The Protection Bill.

1881. Even with his adroit manipulation they did not make the flesh of his hearers creep. Serious crime, such as homicide, was nothing like what it had been when Lord Grey's Government introduced their Coercion Bill in 1833. Mr. Forster talked much of "agrarian outrages," which, by the police returns, exceeded two thousand in 1880. They were more than thirty per cent above the number in 1845, hitherto the worst year on record. But many of these "outrages" were threatening letters, and many threatening letters are practical jokes. The most serious feature of the case was intimidation, not crime. As the Chief Secretary said, "In Ireland the Land League Law is supreme, and there is a real reign of terror over the whole country. No man dares take a farm from which another person has been ejected, nor work for a man who pays his rent, or who refuses to join the Land League." Although this statement may have been too highly coloured, the substance of it was true, and its continuance was incompatible with civilised society. The only question was what remedy should be applied. Mr. Forster was quite willing that the agrarian grievance should be redressed if only the supremacy of law were first asserted. Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, though they ultimately yielded to the exigencies of the Irish Government, would have trusted to the effect of healing methods. "Force," said Mr. Bright, truly and finely, "force is no remedy for lawlessness." Lawlessness is a temper of mind, and, in the terse language of Mr. Grant Duff, you cannot "imprison a feeling." Mr. Forster was under the influence of genuine emotion when he said, "If I had thought that this duty would devolve on the Irish Secretary, I would never have held the office; if I could have foreseen that this would be the result of twenty years of

Parliamentary life, I would have left Parliament rather than have undertaken it." But Mr. Forster, despite his early experience in relieving Irish distress with the Society of Friends, knew very little about the Ireland of 1880. The "village tyrants," who were, in his opinion, at the bottom of the disturbance, were the effect and not the cause. Mr. Charles Russell, then Member for Dundalk, afterwards Lord Chief Justice of England, made an effective retort when he quoted from Gray the familiar couplet: — 1881.

> Some village Hampden, who with dauntless breast
> The little tyrant of his fields withstood.

But the ruffians to whom both orators alluded deserved neither the open compliment of their admirer nor the disguised tribute of their assailant. Ireland was in a state of revolution, and they belonged to the scum which all revolutions throw up. The serious forces were the misery of the small tenants on the one side, and the political organisation on the other. The case against Mr. Forster's Bill was that it neither destroyed the League nor removed the source of its power. His motion was met by an amendment that coercion should be postponed to remedial measures, and this amendment was judiciously placed in the hands of a moderate Home Ruler, Dr. Lyons, Member for Dublin. Mr. Dillon, the son of an Irish patriot, and an Irish patriot himself, used an argument which should at least have appealed to Liberals. Unjust evictions, he said, were the cause of Irish disorder, and this Bill would result in making ten thousand families homeless. If the force of England were employed to uphold one class in Ireland against the rest of the Irish people, the influence of the League would be not diminished but extended, and three Irishmen out of four would

1881. be ready to vote for annexation with the United States. Mr. Dillon's earnestness procured him an attentive hearing. But the Liberal majority had made up their minds. Forgetting that they had never applied their own principles in their full extent to Ireland, they were surprised and annoyed to find that Irishmen drew no distinction between them and their opponents. They expected gratitude for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and for the Land Act of 1870. They met only with further demands, and with an attitude of sullen hostility to England. Mr. Parnell's tactics widened the breach still further. He resolved to fight the Bill by abusing the rules of the House, and to enter into a contest of sheer physical endurance. The Government refused all entreaties to give any outline of their agrarian legislation until Mr. Forster was made Dictator of Ireland and the Conservatives tendered them a steady, unflinching support.

The policy of obstruction.

Then the House of Commons, where no power of closing discussion had ever existed, discovered for the first time what obstruction really meant. On the second day of the debate, which was a Tuesday, the forms of the House compelled Mr. Gladstone to move the postponement of other orders, and this preliminary motion was discussed for twenty-two hours till two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. On Thursday Members were once more able to talk about the Bill, and Mr. Bright explained his position. Although he had, like Mr. Chamberlain, who maintained unbroken silence, accepted the measure from the Irish Executive with great reluctance, his pugnacious instincts revived when he found himself on his legs, and he charged the leaders of the Land League with demoralising the Irish people, which was putting the cart before the horse. He had been peculiarly irritated by a comparison of

Jan. 25.

the Land League with the League against the Corn Laws, and he contrasted the guilt of the one with the innocence of the other in a fashion which the Irish Home Rulers could not abide. They forgot all his memorable services to their country, and assailed him with an acrimony which no stress of politics could excuse. The Prime Minister, who had been almost as reluctant to propose coercion as Mr. Bright himself, spoke with less bitterness, but even greater vehemence. "With painful and fatal precision," he said, "the steps of crime dog the steps of the Land League. . . . Therefore, in pressing our proposal on the British Parliament we feel that we are acting in a truly national spirit, and that the effect of its being passed into law will be to restore to Ireland the first conditions of Christian and civilised existence." A week after Mr. Forster had risen to introduce his Bill the House was still considering whether he should be allowed to bring it in. Public opinion was roused, the large constituencies were restive at the stoppage of business, and on this Monday afternoon the Prime Minister announced that a vote would be taken on the introduction of the Bill at that sitting. "That sitting" was destined to last for forty-one hours. On Tuesday at noon, when the House had sat all night, the Speaker came to the conclusion that Government, though supported by almost every British Member on both sides, would fail, and that, unless he intervened, another adjournment must ensue. He determined to extricate the House from an otherwise insoluble difficulty by carrying out what he knew was the general desire of those who had elected him to be their mouthpiece. He accordingly sent for Mr. Gladstone, and told him that if the debate had not concluded by Wednesday morning, he would put the question that leave be

1881.

John Bright and the Parnellites.

Gladstone on the Land League.

Jan. 31.

The final struggle.

1881. given to introduce the Bill. By that time, he thought, public opinion would have become alive to the extreme gravity of a crisis which no other means could reach. He made it, however, a condition that after this step had been taken more authority for the future should be given either to the House or to him. The Cabinet met at four in the Speaker's library, and agreed to this proposal in the form of conferring increased powers on the Speaker himself. Sir Stafford Northcote as Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Playfair as Deputy-Speaker, and Sir Erskine May as Clerk of the House were the only other persons made acquainted with the Speaker's mind.[1] At midnight he left the Chair, as he had left it on previous occasions, to his Deputy, the Chairman of Ways and Means. This was in the ordinary course, and excited no remark. But when he resumed his place at nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, both the Leaders were present, the front Benches were occupied, and the House was almost full. The Irish Member[2] who happened to be on his legs resumed his seat in accordance with custom, expecting to be at once called. But instead of calling him, the Speaker slowly and solemnly announced his intention of closing the debate. A necessity had, he held, arisen for the exercise of independent power from the Chair. An important measure, declared by the Government to be essential for the maintenance of public order, and not denied to be so by the regular Opposition, had been discussed for five days without completing its preliminary stage. The credit of the House was threatened and its authority was paralysed. There was no prescribed method of saving the one, or of restoring the other. He therefore, trusting

The Speaker's action.

Feb. 2.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 52–53.
[2] Mr. Biggar.

to the support of the House, should forthwith put the question that the Bill might be introduced. The numbers were 164 to 19, and Mr. Forster brought up his Bill from the Bar. 1881.

Thus ended, in not undignified calm, a great episode in the history of Parliament. Although the majority had conquered, their triumph was by no means unimpaired. The Irishmen who shouted "Privilege" as they left the House were wrong in supposing that they could galvanise into life the old quarrels of the seventeenth century between the House of Commons and the Crown. The Crown, that is to say the Ministers, were on the same side as the vast majority of the House. But a small and resolute minority had undoubtedly succeeded in destroying freedom of debate. In order to cope successfully with Irish obstruction, Englishmen had abandoned the ancient right of their representatives in the Legislature to prolong discussion until argument was exhausted. The French word *clôture*, almost as hateful to an English ear as *coup d'état*, became frequent and familiar in the political vocabulary. An Irish Member who addressed the Speaker as *M. le Président* was felt to have made a palpable hit. No Speaker was ever by nature more constitutional or less arbitrary than Mr. Brand. Truly did Mr. Gladstone say in his letter to the Queen, "The Speaker's firmness in mind, his suavity in manner, his unwearied patience, his incomparable temper, under a thousand provocations, have rendered possible a really important result." [1] The importance of the result was all the greater for the magnitude of the obstacles over which it was reached. On the one hand was a small group of Irishmen, among whom

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 53. The Speaker's services were recognised by the Grand Cross of the Bath, which, in the circumstances, he would perhaps have done better to refuse.

1881. only two or three had any personal ability or distinction. On the other were the Parliamentary traditions of six hundred years, the British love of individual freedom, and a jealousy of autocratic power in Church or State which had destroyed the jurisdiction of the Pope and ruined the fortunes of the Stuarts. As the great Scotsman then on his death-bed in Chelsea truly said, "The British people do not love anarchy," and they appreciate vigour. The Speaker became the most popular man in Great Britain. When at the commencement of the ordinary sitting at twelve o'clock on Wednesday he was asked by Mr. Labouchere under what standing order he had acted in closing debate, and replied that he had acted on his own responsibility from a sense of duty to the House, the cheering was such as he had never heard before.

Popularity of the Speaker.

The rest of the day was wasted in idle recrimination. But on Thursday, the 3rd of February, there was another, and a still fiercer, struggle between the Parnellites and the rest of the House. The Prime Minister, in fulfilment of his compact with the Speaker, had given notice that he would move a novel and startling Resolution. If the House voted by a majority of three to one that the state of public business was urgent, the whole conduct of that business was to be under the control of the Chair until the Speaker should terminate his own special authority. But before Mr. Gladstone could propose his motion an announcement was made to the House which exasperated Irish Nationalists in the highest degree. Sir William Harcourt stated, in answer to a question, that Michael Davitt, the founder of the Land League, had been that day sent back to penal servitude in Portland prison. The tone in which the Home Secretary gave this information,

The Emergency Rules.

Arrest of Davitt.

and the applause with which it was received, goaded an excitable party beyond endurance. They naturally thought that in declining to wait for the Coercion Bill to pass, and in treating Mr. Davitt as a common criminal, the Government had been mean and cruel. The pretence that Mr. Davitt had violated his ticket-of-leave was idle. He was arrested as an agitator on account of his recent speeches in Ireland, not because he had insufficiently expiated the political offences of his youth.[1] The colleagues of Mr. Davitt in the Land League who were also Members of Parliament took their revenge by persistently interrupting Mr. Gladstone, and moving, after his unfortunate precedent of the previous year, that he should not be heard. One by one they were suspended by the House, many in a batch, for refusing to leave their places on a division, and were removed by the Serjeant-at-Arms. When thirty-seven of them, Mr. Dillon the first and Mr. Parnell the second, had been thus excluded, Mr. Gladstone was at last able, between eight and nine o'clock, to move his Resolution in a speech which, as Sir Stafford Northcote said, enthralled and entranced the House. "Personally," he declared, "my share in these arrangements is but small. My lease is all but run out." He implored younger men, who had their careers before them, not to let the House of Commons, which had been the mainstay, and power, and glory of the country, degenerate into the laughing-stock of the world. To such an appeal there could be only one answer, and before the House rose, the motion, slightly modified, was carried. The Speaker at once set himself to frame rules of urgency, and discharged his task with so

1881.

Suspension of Irish Members.

The Speaker's Regulations.

[1] Michael Davitt was convicted of treason felony in 1870, and sentenced by Chief-Justice Cockburn to penal servitude for fifteen years. At the close of 1877 he was released by Mr. Secretary Cross on licence, or ticket-of-leave.

1881. much prudence that most of them have since been incorporated in the permanent procedure of the House. Under these drastic restrictions, among which was the right to resolve that all remaining amendments should be put without debate at a fixed hour, the Coercion Bill made comparatively rapid progress, and left the House of Commons before the end of February. Two days sufficed for its consideration by the Lords, who could not well make it stronger, and had no desire to make it weaker, so that it received the Royal Assent on the 2nd of March. Mr. Forster had his way, and was legal dictator of Ireland. He went at once, as was his duty, to Dublin, and the Arms Bill, a supplementary measure, was introduced by Sir William Harcourt. To this Bill, which prohibited arms and ammunition in districts proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant, it was difficult reasonably to object. The rules of urgency, however, were required to pass it, and Sir William Harcourt did not by his language improve its chances. The doctrine of the Land League, he said, in reply to Mr. Dillon, was the doctrine of treason and assassination. Mr. Dillon was not always careful in his choice of language. But his argument, good or bad, that the suppression of the Land League would lead to an increase of violence and crime, did not imply that he personally was in favour of either. It was not till the 21st of March that the Arms Bill became law, and the Irish Government were provided with all the weapons for which they asked. Although the Act for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* in Ireland extended only till the 30th of September 1882, it was regarded by some Liberals with grave uneasiness. In the House of Commons it had very few English opponents, of whom the most conspicuous were Mr. Cowen, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Bradlaugh.

The Protection Bill passed.

The Arms Bill.

But it was criticised with much severity by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which had the more influence with advanced politicians because they believed it to express the views of Mr. Chamberlain as well as those of its editor, Mr. Morley. Throughout the protracted debates on coercion, or, as it was officially called, the protection of person and property, Mr. Chamberlain was silent. In reply to the taunts and jeers of ungrateful Irishmen Mr. Bright spoke out. His colleague in the Cabinet and the representation of Birmingham was satisfied with not resigning. 1881.

CHAPTER V

THE POLICY OF REVERSAL

1881. Jan. 6. Evacuation of Kandahar.

"It is not my intention," said Her Majesty in the Speech from the Throne, "that the occupation of Kandahar shall be permanently maintained." Her Majesty's Ministers were indeed committed by public and emphatic assurances against a policy of conquest in Afghanistan. They had denounced it as foolish, expensive, and wrong. If the General Election meant anything, it meant disapproval of Lord Lytton's procedure, and return to the more prudent tactics of Lord Lawrence. Lord Beaconsfield, naturally chagrined, referred with bitter sarcasm in the debate on the Address to Mr. Gladstone's policy of scuttle. A few days afterwards Lord Lytton delivered his maiden speech to the House of Lords in defence of his own Viceroyalty. That the speech was a brilliant performance every one acknowledged. But the case for the retention of Kandahar must have been bad indeed when it depended upon a prophecy that England would have either to re-occupy the town, or become in India a tenant at will of Russia. The mere use of dyslogistic terms does not assist the solution of controversial problems. If Mr. Gladstone had scuttled out of Kandahar, Lord Beaconsfield had scuttled out of Kabul. The question was not one of scuttle, or of grab, but of making Afghanistan under Abdur Rahman strong, indepen-

Jan. 10.

dent, and friendly. A strong and independent Afghanistan without Kandahar was impossible. Nor would Abdur Rahman be friendly unless he were recognised as in every respect the successor of Dost Mohammed. Lord Hartington, writing to Lord Ripon on the 11th of November 1880, declared his opinion, and the opinion of the Cabinet, against advancing the frontier of India, and in favour of employing a native, not a British, Envoy at Kabul. The Russian correspondence found at Kabul was at this time published by the *Standard* as a justification of Lord Lytton. But if it proved that in 1878, before the Congress of Berlin, Russia was not unwilling to use Sher Ali against British power in India, it showed also that the Russian Government through General Kaufmann had distinctly advised him to agree with England after the Treaty of Berlin had been signed. Lord Hartington, however, made it perfectly clear that England did not acknowledge any right on Russia's part to interfere in Afghanistan. Such interference, which Russia had always disclaimed, would not, he explained, be tolerated by the Government of the Queen. The difference between the Liberal and Conservative Administrations concerned means, not ends. Both were determined that Afghanistan should be kept outside the sphere of Russian influence. But while Lord Lytton and Lord Cranbrook considered that the best means of counteracting Russia was the dismemberment and partition of Afghan territory, Lord Ripon and Lord Hartington believed that a strong and independent Afghanistan would be most friendly to the Empress of India, and least friendly to the Czar. They therefore, with the approval of the Cabinet, resolved to withdraw British troops not only from Kandahar, but also from the Khyber Pass and the Kuram Valley. Lord Hartington was in fact opposed to 1881.

1881. any extension of Indian boundaries beyond the point at which they stood when Lord Lytton succeeded Lord Northbrook. The question was one which neatly divided parties, and as such was discussed in both Houses of Parliament. The House of Lords passed by 165 votes to 79 a vote of censure which Lord Lytton proposed. A similar motion, upon which the fate of the Government depended, was negatived in the House of Commons by 336 to 216. Lord Derby characteristically advised the Peers not to show their own weakness by carrying a nugatory resolution, and the Duke of Argyll proved, with his accustomed eloquence, that the arguments for retaining Kandahar were equally good for annexing Afghanistan, which nobody wanted to do. But of these debates, brilliant as one of them was at the time considered, two speeches only have permanent interest and value. Lord Hartington in the House of Commons summed up the case for the Government with the ability of an advocate and the dignity of a Judge.[1] In the House of Peers Lord Beaconsfield struck a higher note, and, in reference to a popular catchword of the day, declared that the key of India was not Merv, nor Herat, nor Kandahar, but London. Lord Beaconsfield, like the old Roman, never despaired of the Republic, and he was too great a man to pretend that the reversal of his policy implied the degradation of his country.

Censure of the Lords. March 4.

Approval of the Commons. March 25.

The key of India.

Events soon showed that he was right, and that Lord Ripon had been as wise in leaving Kandahar to Abdur Rahman as Lord Lytton had been in recognising him at Kabul. No ruler of Afghanistan proved better able to hold his ground than Abdur Rahman. His one dangerous enemy was his cousin,

[1] Mr. Gladstone considered this the best debating speech he had ever heard in Parliament.

Ayub Khan, who occupied Kandahar in July 1881 after the retirement of the British troops. But he did not remain there long. Within three months Abdur Rahman swooped down upon him from the north, defeated him in a pitched battle, took all his guns, pursued him from Kandahar to Herat, and finally drove him over the Persian frontier. Peace then settled upon the country, and the new Amir, who had been a pensioner of Russia, became the fast friend of the Indian Government.

1881.

Defeat of Ayub Khan. Sept. 22.

Lord Beaconsfield did not live to see the pacification of Afghanistan. His last public appearance of any moment was made in the debate on Kandahar, and he was then obviously struggling with physical weakness. He died of bronchitis after three weeks' illness at his house in Curzon Street, on the 19th of April 1881, aged seventy-six. It was characteristic of his magnanimity that he could do justice to the English people as an imperial race and appropriate guardians of India after they had decisively rejected the Indian projects to which he had committed himself. He had both the sense of perspective and largeness of mind. Although he was not wholly exempt from that insolence born of prosperity which the Greeks regarded as an unpardonable sin, his reason was unaffected by the fumes even of Royal flattery, and he did not feel, when he had been turned out of office, that the world was coming to an end. If he expected neither his victory in 1874 nor his defeat in 1880, he was equal to either event, and bore both of them with the calmness of a true philosopher. While his foreign policy was abandoned, and the Treaty of Berlin directed against the Turk, his prediction of evil in Ireland had been amply fulfilled, and Mr. Gladstone's denial completely falsified. At the time of his death he was, with the doubtful exceptions of the British Premier and the German

Death of Lord Beaconsfield.

1881. Chancellor, the most remarkable figure in the politics of Europe. At the Congress of Berlin the assembled diplomatists recognised that he and Prince Bismarck were the master spirits, and though most things had been settled beforehand, he managed to procure for Turkey the right of defending the Balkans. In the House of Lords he spoke with a stately dignity becoming his position and his age. But it was in the House of Commons that he found himself at home, and it is impossible without a thorough knowledge of that peculiar assembly to appreciate Disraeli. He studied it for forty years, until he was more at home there than at Hughenden or Grosvenor Gate. After he became Leader of his party he scarcely left his place while the House was sitting, except for a hasty meal. He could play upon the House, as he said of Peel, like an old fiddle, and rarely indeed did he mistake its temper or clash with its tone. His early eccentricities of costume were dropped when they had served their purpose by attracting notice, and he relied upon the more legitimate method of elaborately careless epigram. Justly proud as he was to be thought a man of letters, Disraeli was before all things a politician. In politics he lived, and moved, and had his being. They led him in course of time from Westminster to Windsor, and there he became an incomparable courtier. After the Royal Titles Act, if not before, his Sovereign was really his subject. It was one of the few misfortunes in a long career of dazzling success that when Disraeli achieved real power he was past the age when mental effort is a pleasure. Gladstone is a singular exception. Neither Palmerston nor Disraeli wished after becoming Prime Minister to do more than he could help. Disraeli's zeal for social and sanitary reform evaporated in phrases. His most daring

and skilful stroke of policy was his purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal. The idea that he settled the Eastern question on the principles of his early novels is worthy of those romances themselves. He could not foresee the Bulgarian massacres, and even the Servian declaration of war against Turkey took him, so he said, by surprise. The "great refusal" of his life, which made the whole of his Eastern policy dust and ashes, was his failure to take Egypt in 1878. To take it was the natural, and would have been the beneficent, consequence of his financial operation in 1875. He could not allege moral scruples, for obvious reasons. He could not allege practical difficulties, for Prince Bismarck, the most practical statesman of the age, was in favour of the arrangement. It would have been equally advantageous to Egypt, to India, and to England. But it was inconsistent with the integrity of the Turkish Empire, and therefore, instead of the Khedive becoming a vassal of the Queen in Egypt, the Queen was made a vassal of the Sultan in Cyprus. Lord Beaconsfield's devotion to Turkish interests cost his native country dear. Otherwise his Orientalism was an agreeable part of his character. It saved him at least from the slavery to political formulas which prevented so many of his contemporaries from thinking for themselves. To him these conventional propositions meant nothing at all. He found the solution of everything in race. He was neither a Whig nor a Tory, neither a Liberal nor a Conservative. He was a Jew. Born and bred in England, neither writing nor speaking any other language than English, familiar for the best part of his life with the most characteristic of English institutions, he never became a real Englishman. That was the secret of his strange fascination, his baffling charm. Earnest, strenuous men, who 1881.

1881. could not feel it, detested him, though, like Mr. Gladstone, they could admire his courage. Ordinary people were puzzled to know what was going on behind that sphinx-like inexpressiveness of countenance, and were all the more interested in their "miraculous Premier" because they could not trace the workings of his mind. Nothing became him better than the method of his leaving power. If he was not always moderate in prosperity, he was always dignified in adversity, and could live in the recollections of the past without repining at the necessities of the present.

Lord Beaconsfield's death, though he was not in office, left one vacancy to be filled, and the Conservative Peers unanimously chose the Marquess of Salisbury to be their Leader. He was proposed and seconded by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Cairns, who had both filled the post themselves. Since 1878 Lord Salisbury had been Lord Beaconsfield's most faithful lieutenant, to the amazement and amusement of those who knew and remembered their former relations. The tide in the affairs of his life came when Lord Derby resigned the Foreign Office, and he now reaped the personal advantage of the use which he then made of it. If he could have changed places with his one remaining rival, Sir Stafford Northcote, the Opposition both in the Lords and in the Commons would have been better led. For electing the leader of a whole party no machinery exists.

May 9. Leadership of Lord Salisbury.

Primrose League.

In the year that Lord Beaconsfield died there was founded and dedicated to his honour or his memory the most permanently successful of all the political organisations that have ever been known in England. The Primrose League, originally suggested by Sir Drummond Wolff, and sedulously fostered by Lord Randolph Churchill, was called after Lord Beaconsfield's favourite flower. Whether he really

cared much for primroses is doubtful, and not material. The astute politicians who set up the League were not thinking of the dead. They created and sustained a mighty machine for bringing social influence to bear upon public life. Although their Knights, and Dames, and Local Habitations lent themselves to easy ridicule, the apparatus was designed to attract the middle class, and its success was enormous. In four years the Primrose League had half-a-million members, and not a constituency in England was safe from its invasion. The titled ladies who belonged to it were numerous, nor did they disdain the company of any man who had a vote to give. Constitutional, or at least Conservative, principles were made a passport to the sort of society which had hitherto been accessible only through the *Family Herald*, and a general sense that all respectable people were Conservatives was diligently diffused. Nor was the League unmindful of the poor, or forgetful of household suffrage in towns. Its meetings were addressed by eminent statesmen from Lord Salisbury downwards. But its real work was not done on the platform. As a canvassing agency it was unrivalled, and the Dames, even more than the Knights, indoctrinated thousands with the notion that the honour of the country was not safe in the hands of Liberals, because every gentleman was a Conservative, or at least a Tory Democrat. 1881.

In the case of Afghanistan the new Government had with perfect loyalty, and with reasonable promptitude, fulfilled the pledges given to the constituencies at the General Election. The case of the Transvaal stood in their opinion on a different footing, and had certainly been treated in a different way. At a meeting of the Cabinet held on the 7th of May 1880, it was decided not to relinquish the Queen's sovereignty over the Retention of the Transvaal.

1881. Transvaal, but to give the country self-government as a part of South African federation. This in spite of Mr. Gladstone's protest in Midlothian against the annexation, and Lord Hartington's argument in the former House of Commons that if the balance of advantage were in favour of restoring their independence to the Boers, no false sense of dignity should stand in the way.[1] Kruger and Joubert naturally took such language to mean that if the Liberals returned to power their own territory would be given back to them. They wrote as much to Mr. Gladstone, and were bitterly disappointed to be told that regard for the rights of native races prevented compliance with their request. The Radical section of the Cabinet, that is to say Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, were for immediate restoration. Mr. Gladstone leaned towards their way of thinking. But the Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley, an advanced Liberal in home politics, the politics of the United Kingdom, had arbitrarily annexed the Diamond Fields, and had given Mr. Gladstone a very lukewarm support on the question of the East. He was assured from the Cape that all the Boers, except a turbulent handful, were reconciled to British rule, and that if the Transvaal were surrendered, federation would be impossible. As a matter of fact, federation was made impossible by the refusal to surrender the Transvaal, and in the last month of 1880 the Boers took up arms. Neither the authorities at Cape Town, nor the authorities at Pretoria, neither Lord Beaconsfield's nor Mr. Gladstone's Administration at home, can be acquitted of ignorance and indifference so far as the Transvaal was concerned. Shepstone and Lanyon had not really attempted to reconcile the Boers with British rule. All that they did was to make the

May 10, 1880.

Lord Kimberley's view.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 27–8.

collection of taxes more stringent than it had been before. Neither Frere nor Wolseley understood the dangerous temper of the burghers, and when Colley came out in June 1880 he was told by Lanyon that organised resistance to British power was impossible. Sir George Colley's reputation in India stood very high both as a soldier and as an administrator. His appointment, made by the Conservative Ministry and not disturbed by their successors, was to succeed Sir Garnet Wolseley as High Commissioner of South-East Africa, with chief command of the forces in Natal and the Transvaal.[1] He found the Boers, who had hoped to recover their independence if the Liberals obtained a majority, exasperated by the unfavourable decision of the Liberal Government. Desertions from the British garrisons, especially from the dragoons, were frequent.[2] But more serious even than desertions was the complacent satisfaction of Sir Owen Lanyon with things as they were, or rather as they seemed. So late as the 11th of December he wrote to Colley about the Boers, "They are incapable of any united action, and they are mortal cowards; so anything they may do will be but a spark in the pan."[3] President Brand of the Orange Free State, an honest and sagacious friend of both sides who was not deceived by appearances, sent an urgent message of warning to Cape Town. Sir Bartle Frere had been recalled, and his successor, Sir Hercules Robinson, had not arrived from New Zealand. The message was forwarded by post to London, and nothing was done. Meanwhile the Boer Republic was proclaimed at Heidelberg, and Sir Owen Lanyon was surrounded at Pretoria. Of the five other British garrisons all were invested,

1881.

Boer rising.

Dec. 6.

Brand's warning.

Dec. 16.

[1] The civil administration of the Transvaal remained with Sir Owen Lanyon.

[2] Butler's *Life of Colley*, p. 259.

[3] *Id.* p. 268.

1881. and one, Potschefstroom, was unprovided for a
Brunkerspruit. siege. At Brunkerspruit, just before Christmas, a detachment of British soldiers was cut up, and their commanding officer, Colonel Anstruther, was
Jan. 10. killed.[1] Again President Brand intervened, and this time Lord Kimberley replied that if the Boers would lay down their arms, matters might be arranged. Still no definite communication was made to the Boers, and they invaded Natal at
Laing's Nek. Laing's Nek. There they were attacked by Sir George Colley, who was marching to the relief of Potschefstroom with an inadequate force of fifteen hundred men, and repulsed him with considerable
Feb. 8. loss. A fortnight after Laing's Nek, and a few days after an indecisive action on the Ingogo River,
Feb. 12. Kruger proposed to Colley that a Royal Commission should be sent out to ascertain the truth. Colley at once telegraphed the proposal, of which he did not approve, to the Colonial Office, and it
Feb. 15. was considered by the Cabinet.[2] By this time Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain had made it clear that they would resign unless terms were made. Sir George Colley was directed to tell the Boers that, if they would cease from further resistance, a Commission would be appointed. A reasonable time was to be fixed for the reception of an answer, and meanwhile the garrisons were not to be relieved by military measures, nor was Laing's Nek to be occupied. Sir George Colley wrote to Kruger on the 21st of February, transmitting Lord Kimberley's message, and demanding a reply within forty-eight hours, or five days before Kruger received his letter. There is no question of his good faith, but he had been told in error that Kruger

[1] The charge of treachery afterwards made against the Boers in connection with this incident is not supported by Colley's General Order, issued from Pietermaritzburg on the 28th of December. See Butler's *Life of Colley*, pp. 409–10.

[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 35.

was near at hand. On the 26th, three days after the time fixed by himself, not having, for obvious reasons, heard from Kruger, who was at a distance, he took a step for which the best and least controversial epithet is tragic, by occupying with a small force Majuba Hill, four miles within the frontier of Natal, in the apparent expectation that he would make Laing's Nek untenable for the Boers. He was expecting reinforcements, but he could not wait for them, lest Majuba should be occupied by the Boers themselves. He reached the summit unobserved, in the full confidence that his position was impregnable, as it ought to have been, for his choice of it was tactically sound. Next morning the Boers, who had begun to retire from the Nek, retraced their steps, and marched up Majuba Hill in two small, separate bodies, whose advance was covered by an unremitting fire from below. General Smidt, the Boer Commander, carried out this movement with supreme military success. While Sir George Colley's force were reposing in fancied security on the top of Majuba, the Boers had been slowly, very slowly, climbing upwards. The sun rose at a quarter to six. But it was not till seven that they came within range, and began to shoot simultaneously from several points. At half-past nine the chief officer of Sir George Colley's staff signalled that the Boers were wasting ammunition. They were not wasting it. They were protecting the advance of the storming parties, and they made Colley believe, even an hour before noon, that they were masking their retreat. The fire of his own men was quite useless. Suddenly, about half-past one, a body of Boers stepped back from behind a rock, and aimed their rifles directly at the picquet above them. Sir George Colley moved at once to the point of danger, urging the men of the reserve to follow.

1881. Majuba.

1881. They met their own countrymen recoiling from the Boer fire, and in the confusion the hill-top was lost, in spite of Colley's efforts to rally them. He was shot through the head as he stood facing the enemy. About ninety others fell, and sixty prisoners were taken, although the whole Boer force did not amount to two hundred men. So perished a gallant and heroic soldier who might have rendered invaluable service to the State if the force at his disposal had been adequate to ensure victory in the enterprise he undertook. He had acquired in India remarkable influence over Lord Lytton, whose forward policy he encouraged, and his military reputation was undoubted till the fatal incident which closed his career. From the charge of double dealing, which has been made against him, he is wholly free. The period fixed by himself had elapsed, he had given no pledge to suspend hostilities, and he had not entered the Transvaal. His misconception of Kruger's whereabouts explains his undue haste, and his anxiety for the garrison of Potschefstroom, with his wish to dominate Laing's Nek, instead of being dominated by it, is an intelligible defence of his strategical manœuvre.

Sir George Colley.

So soon as the War Office heard of Sir George Colley's death, Sir Frederick Roberts was sent out to succeed him. But meanwhile prompt action of some sort had to be taken. Grievous as the result of the attack on Majuba was, only hysterical panic could magnify it into a national disaster, and the problem to be solved was not military, but political. What had become of Colley's letter to Kruger, and of Kruger's reply? Nobody in England then knew. As a matter of fact the message reached Kruger on the morrow of Majuba, and to Sir Evelyn Wood, who had temporarily taken Colley's place, was handed on the 7th of March Kruger's accept-

ance of the terms. If before that date British troops had resumed the offensive, the conduct of the British Government, whatever technical pleas might have been set up for it, would have been morally wrong. Sir Evelyn Wood, however, considered that, notwithstanding Kruger's compliance, the superiority of British arms should be vindicated, and that then the Boers would disperse to their homes. Otherwise, he thought, they might not obey their own leaders. The Cabinet overruled him, and decided that negotiations must proceed. An armistice for eight days had already been arranged between Wood and Joubert at the instance of President Brand, who alone of all the statesmen engaged in these tangled transactions emerges without a stain upon either his honour or his intelligence.

1881.

Kruger's acceptance of terms.

March 8.

Sir Evelyn Wood overruled.

When it became known in England that peace was to be made after Majuba, there arose a furious outcry against the Government, who were accused of neglecting justice, and yielding only to force. It cannot be said that this charge was without foundation. Most sensible men would indeed allow that the misfortune of a brave and hapless General was no reason for interrupting negotiations which the Boers had conducted honestly. The true greatness of a country appears, as Mr. Chamberlain said, in disregarding idle taunts of cowardice, which are not believed by those who make them. When Mr. Gladstone wrote to a Liberal candidate in Cheshire that "it was a question of saving the country from sheer blood-guiltiness," [1] he spoke the truth. But then he should have thought of it before. One need not be a member of the Peace Society to know that to fight for fighting's sake is a crime against humanity, and a sin against God. This elementary principle

Policy of the Government.

[1] See the *Times*, April 15, 1881.

1881. does not touch the question whether terms with the Boers should have been originally entertained at all. Still less does it meet the far graver case that Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues should have peacefully annulled the annexation of the Transvaal so soon as they received power from the hands of the country. It is not enough in politics to do the right things. They must be done at the right times, and in the right ways. Mr. Gladstone had not said very much, before he came into office, about the annexation of the Transvaal, but what he did say was decisive. "If," he exclaimed in Scotland, coupling the Transvaal with Cyprus, "these acquisitions were as valuable as they are valueless, I would repudiate them, because they were obtained by means dishonourable to the character of the country." [1] Lord Hartington was quite as deeply committed to the same view. Mr. Gladstone afterwards argued that repudiation merely meant a disclaimer of responsibility, and he referred to the case of Scinde, whose annexation had been confirmed in 1843 by the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel. It is of course true that steps which have been wrongly taken cannot always be retraced. But these general propositions carry one a very little way in dealing with particular instances. If Scinde had been abandoned, it would have been abandoned to anarchy and civil war. The Boers were as well able to manage their own affairs as their compatriots in Holland, or in Cape Colony, and they at least understood Mr. Gladstone to have pronounced in favour of their independence. That the Cabinet should have taken time to consider their course was reasonable. There were difficulties to surmount. Sir Garnet Wolseley had told the Boers that the Vaal would flow back to the Drakensberg before the British flag ceased to

[1] *Speeches in Scotland*, i. 63.

float over Pretoria. But in making that rhetorical assertion Sir Garnet could not bind the people of England, and much more importance should have been attached to a judicious prediction of his, which passed altogether unheeded. He did not share Mr. Gladstone's delusion that the country was worthless. Writing to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach on the 13th of November 1879 he said, "The Transvaal is rich in minerals; gold has already been found in quantities, and there can be little doubt that larger and still more valuable goldfields will sooner or later be discovered. Any such discovery would soon bring a large British population here." This remarkable prophecy does not seem to have made the smallest impression either upon Sir Michael or upon Lord Kimberley, and even the City was not roused. Lord Kimberley persisted in ignoring the Boer complaints. He trusted Sir Owen Lanyon, who kept assuring him for months that most of the Boers desired to live under British sway. Even at the close of the year 1880, when the Dutch inhabitants of the Transvaal had actually risen in rebellion, he thought the time for conciliation inopportune. It was scarcely more opportune after Laing's Nek. The Queen's Speech for 1881 declared that the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of the Queen's authority had of necessity set aside for the time any plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs, without prejudice to the interests of the natives, which Her Majesty had been desirous to confer. This was on the 6th of January, and it was on the 10th that Lord Kimberley accepted the overtures of President Brand. To defend a Government which had shown such vacillation of purpose is impossible. Their conduct was neither magnanimous, nor

1881.

1881. marked by that low prudence which cares less for principle than for effect. Nevertheless their final, which should in the circumstances have been their immediate, decision was wise because it was really inevitable. Sir Hercules Robinson told them in plain language that they had only a choice of evils. If the Transvaal were reconquered, it would have to be held down for years by force, and free institutions would be impossible. The Orange State would turn against the Paramount Power, and would be supported by the Dutch in Cape Colony itself. Yet Sir Hercules did not believe in concession after reverse, and against this he protested even before Majuba. The concession, however, was only partial. Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of Cape Colony, and Sir Evelyn Wood imposed their own terms upon the Boers in the Convention of Pretoria, which was not signed till August. Peace was established from the 22nd of March, and Sir Frederick Roberts, to his intense disgust, was recalled from Cape Town twenty-four hours after his arrival.[1]

Convention of Pretoria.

It is curious to observe how little was made of this case by the Opposition in Parliament. Lord Cairns indeed delivered the most eloquent of all his speeches in denunciation of a surrender which he compared with Saratoga and Yorktown. But he did not propose a motion, much less divide the House. It was not till near the end of the summer that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved a vote of censure in the Commons, with the strange result that an almost servile expression of confidence in the Government was carried by a majority of 109. Mr. Henry Fowler, Member for Wolverhampton, distinguished himself by the ability with which he seconded this laudatory amendment, and the Prime

March 31.

July 25.

Policy of the Opposition.

[1] Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*, ii. 379.

Minister received the able support of Mr. Chamberlain. But the division had very little to do with the debate. Weak as the case for the Government was, the case for the Opposition was not much stronger. What was the practical alternative to acceptance of the Boer proposals? It was a double one. The Government might through Sir Frederick Roberts have given the Boers a sound thrashing, and then restored to them their independence. No Minister could justify such a course to any civilised and Christian Assembly. They might, on the other hand, have subjugated the Transvaal, and administered it as conquered territory by the absolute power of the Crown. But that would have been to tear up the Sand River Convention, to violate honour and good faith. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach did not propose it. Lord Cairns did not propose it. It could not be proposed. Lord Carnarvon, a man of the most rigid integrity, always maintained that in 1877 the majority of the Boers were willing and anxious for incorporation in the British Empire. He was deceived by his agents. But even Sir Owen Lanyon had ceased to assert this in 1881. What might have happened if the Boers had been well governed by Englishmen must be a matter of opinion. They had been cleverly misgoverned by Shepstone. They had been stupidly misgoverned by Lanyon. They wished to govern themselves. The House of Assembly at the Cape expressed unanimous approval of the peace. 1881.

What Mr. Gladstone could do he did. He insisted that the Suzerainty of the Queen over the Transvaal should be acknowledged, that the foreign relations of the country should be under British control, and that there should be a British Resident at Pretoria to ensure the protection of natives, for whom special reservations of territory were made. Conditional independence.

1881. The clauses in the Sand River Convention against slavery were reaffirmed, although the Boers indignantly protested against them as not required, and it could never be proved that any slave had been released after the British occupation of 1877. The Boers were not modern Liberals, or even modern Conservatives, and the equality of the Kaffirs with themselves was an idea which they could not grasp. Still, even Boers are progressive in their own despite, and the charges of slavery brought against them were for the most part stale. A heavier penalty could not well be put upon it than to make personal freedom an integral part of the Convention, and a condition of the whole. The Suzerainty of the Queen was a provision of doubtful wisdom, and uncertain value. No lawyer could say exactly what it meant, except that it did not mean sovereignty, and was not an English term. So little satisfied with it were the Boers that the Convention, though signed on the 3rd of August, was not ratified by the Volksraad, or Boer Parliament, till the 25th of October, and then only because they were told that they must take it, or leave it, as it stood. If they had known the inner state of the Cabinet, they might still have held out. A striking letter from Lord Kimberley, written just a fortnight before the ratification, has been preserved by Lord Selborne.[1] "I entirely agree with you," says the Colonial Secretary, "that we ought to maintain a firm attitude. But there is a disposition in so many members of our party to imagine that an Empire can be, and ought to be, maintained without ever resorting to force, that I foresee difficulties when it comes to the real pitch." After pointing out the importance of South Africa to England, especially if the Suez Canal were closed in time of war, Lord Kimberley adds, "If we allow our

[1] *Memorials*, Part II. vol. ii. 6.

supremacy in South Africa to be taken from us, we shall be ousted before long from that country altogether." The Cabinet of which Lord Kimberley was a member had been freely charged with sacrificing that very supremacy upon which he insists, and his letter is important because it shows to what an extent divergence of Liberal opinion had already gone. The reader will observe that, though Lord Kimberley does not expressly mention the Cabinet, he was replying to the Lord Chancellor's request for information of what passed in that body during his temporary confinement to his house. If Lord Kimberley had been left to himself, the Transvaal would not have been restored. It needed all Mr. Gladstone's influence to bring the majority of his colleagues into line with Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain. 1881.

While the Government were struggling with difficulty in South Africa to make the best of a bad job, they succeeded at Constantinople in procuring for Greece some part of what the plenipotentiaries at Berlin recommended in 1878 that she should have, that is to say, Epirus and Thessaly. Against the cession of Epirus Turkey stood firm, and eventually only one-third of it, not including Janina or Metzovo, both strong fortresses, became Greek. But the ability and firmness of Mr. Goschen so far prevailed that the whole of Thessaly was added to the Hellenic Kingdom before he left the Turkish Embassy in the hands of Lord Dufferin, and by the end of July the Sultan's troops had quitted the province. About the same time the French Republic assumed a Protectorate of Tunis, which three years before might have consoled France for a British occupation of Egypt. Lord Granville was unable to protest against a proceeding to which Lord Salisbury had given his virtual sanction at Berlin, and had to be content with his diplomatic

The Greek frontier.

April 7.

May 8.

1881. triumph in the case of Greece, which he won without the aid of France, or any other European Power. But it was Mr. Goschen who really brought the Sultan to his knees, and he received the warm congratulations of the Prime Minister on his success.[1]

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 10.

CHAPTER VI

THE IRISH REVOLUTION

THE protracted Session of 1881, which began on the 6th of January and ended on the 27th of August, was almost wholly occupied with the affairs of Ireland. But even in England there were one or two matters which required attention. An attempt to obstruct the progress of legal reform, though led by a Liberal lawyer in the House of Commons, failed both there and in the House of Lords, where Lord Cairns refused to support it. The opportunity was given by two deaths. During the Long Vacation of 1880 died in his eighty-fifth year Sir Fitzroy Kelly, last Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who had spent on the Bench the years that should have been devoted to retirement. In the middle of the Michaelmas Sittings a much more important personage, Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn, died very suddenly, aged seventy-seven, in full mental vigour, and was succeeded by Lord Coleridge, last Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas. This appointment was the best that Mr. Gladstone could have made, for Lord Coleridge had the dignity, the eloquence, and the accomplishments which are more essential than mere learning for a Chief-Justice of England. It was also important on other grounds. Coupled with the vacancy in the Exchequer, it enabled the Government, with the assent of the Judges required by the Judicature

1881.

Legal reform.

Feb. 10.

Sept. 17.

Nov. 20.

1881. Act, to abolish two titular posts useless after the consolidation of the Courts except as pillows for the Law Officers of the Crown. At the same time a short Act relieved the Master of the Rolls from his duties as a Judge of first instance, assigning him as President to one division in the Court of Appeal. On another point Lord Selborne went too far. He arranged that Lords Justices and Chancery Judges should go Circuit in their turn. But the inconvenience of stopping appeals was so grave, the result of setting old equity draftsmen to try prisoners at once so ludicrous and so lamentable, that the change had to be abandoned as hastily as it was made.

March 31. Mr. Bradlaugh again troubled the peace of the House. The Court of Appeal, affirming Mr. Justice Mathew, held that the statutes which enabled witnesses or jurors to affirm did not apply to Parliament, and that Mr. Bradlaugh, not being a Quaker, had vacated his seat by voting unsworn. On the motion of his colleague a new writ was issued for Northampton, and Mr. Bradlaugh was re-elected, though his majority fell. When he presented himself again to take the oath, he was excluded from the precincts until he should give an undertaking, which he never gave, not to disturb the proceedings. So far from giving it he attempted, before the close of the session, to force his way through the folding doors, and was dragged by policemen down the Members' staircase into Palace Yard. As the amount of penalties he had incurred, calculated at five hundred pounds a vote, was estimated at fifty thousand pounds, it looked as if persecution had triumphed all along the line. But Mr. Bradlaugh was a good fighter, and the end was not yet.

Exclusion of Bradlaugh.

April 26.

Aug. 3.

Mr. Gladstone's Budget showed so small a surplus that he could only by a readjustment of the

duties on spirits take off the penny on the Income Tax, which he had imposed the year before, reducing it from sixpence to fivepence in the pound. Mr. Childers and Lord Northbrook were more fortunate in being able to announce that the odious punishment of flogging had been finally and for all purposes abolished in the Army and Navy. But the most important piece of legislation in 1881, next to the Irish Land Act, was the work of a private Member. The relation of newspapers to the Law of Libel had long been difficult and uncertain. The Queen's Bench Division had decided in the case of *Wason* v. *Walter*[1] that a report of proceedings in Parliament, like the report of a trial in a Court of Law, was not actionable, though it contained libels upon individuals, and that fair comments upon it might also be published with impunity. It was otherwise, however, with the report of a public meeting, where the speakers themselves had no privilege, and therefore those who reported them could have none either. Thus the proprietor of a newspaper might be liable in heavy damages for stating that one vestryman called another a thief, unless, though he knew nothing about the matter, he could prove that the charge was true. This absurdity had hitherto been tolerated, and even defended, on the ground that a charge which was comparatively harmless if made to twenty people in a room became serious, perhaps ruinous, when printed in fifty thousand copies of a popular journal. Civil or criminal proceedings might be taken by the party aggrieved, and the defendant might be sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine. Although newspapers are not popular, even with those who derive from them all their political ideas, the gross injustice of such a law could not be seriously denied,

1881.

April 4. The Budget.

Abolition of flogging.

Newspaper Libel Act.

[1] L.R., 4 Q.B.D. p. 73.

1881. and Mr. Hutchinson's Newspaper Libel Act[1] gave to reports of public meetings some share of the protection which Parliamentary and legal reports already enjoyed. It also provided that the owner of a newspaper could not be criminally prosecuted for libel without the leave of the Attorney-General. But these relaxations were closely guarded. The proprietor of the paper sued was compelled to show that publicity was beneficial, at least in the opinion of the jury, and for every paper there must be registered some proprietor's name. Under such stringent conditions was a free Press in a free country allowed to print the truth.

Ever since the meeting of a new Parliament in 1852 Disraeli had set himself against all attempts to revive Protection in any form. No sooner was Lord Beaconsfield dead than some of his followers began to preach the doctrine that free trade was not fair trade. Fair trade, they said, must be reciprocal. It was not fair that foreign Governments should impose protective duties on British goods, and that we should admit their goods without such duties. This is a good example of the maxim that most controversies would be ended as soon as they were begun by a definition of terms. Free trade means in the recognised language of economic science a tariff for revenue only. It is necessarily unilateral, being adopted by England for her own exclusive benefit without regard for the practice of other countries, which she cannot control. Ever since the days of Peel, England had abstained from retaliation, not because it would be unfair to others, but because it would be injurious to herself. Peel had found by experience that the way to fight hostile tariffs was free imports, because manufacturing prosperity depends upon the cheapness

"Fair Trade."

[1] 44 & 45 Vict, c. 60.

of raw material, because cheap food is essential to the welfare of the people, and because the absence of a protective tariff is an advantage in the competition of neutral markets. For, to use a homely illustration, while two men can do less business with each other if one has to work with an arm tied behind him, the man who has both arms free can cut out the impeded man in trading with a third. The movement for "fair trade," partly due to the approaching close of our commercial treaty with France, had some influence upon by-elections, though its advocates were neither numerous nor powerful. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Chamberlain riddled it with sound arguments and apposite illustrations, explaining, for instance, to the House of Commons how beneficial to British commerce, at home and abroad, was the policy of Continental States in giving bounties upon the export of sugar. The two Leaders of the Opposition held ambiguous language. Lord Salisbury, to whom the subject was not congenial, expressed a readiness to retaliate if he only knew how. Sir Stafford Northcote, by intellectual conviction an orthodox economist, hit upon the device of calling "fair trade" a pious opinion, whereby he meant, or should have meant, a belief which it was meritorious, but not necessary, for good Conservatives to hold. If their object was to catch votes without committing themselves, they are entitled to the praise of ingenuity. They left it uncertain what they would do if they came into power, or whether they would do anything at all.

1881. Aug. 12.

The Irish Protection Act and the Irish Arms Act had been passed on the distinct understanding that they must be followed by a Land Bill. Otherwise Coercion would have broken up the Cabinet, and the Radical Ministers would have resigned. At the same time it would have been impossible,

The Land Law Bill.

1881. even for Mr. Gladstone with all his influence, to carry any agrarian reform unless he had first vindicated the authority of the law in some striking and conspicuous fashion. Now that liberty, as known
April 7. in England and Scotland, had ceased in Ireland to exist, Mr. Gladstone felt himself able to expound the leading provisions of his Land Bill in the House of Commons. It proved to be no tinkering measure. A year ago Mr. Forster had acknowledged the necessity of a "strong" Bill,[1] and strong it certainly was. The Cabinet were found to have adopted the
The three F's. three great principles of the Land League: fixity of tenure, fair rent, and free sale. Mr. Gladstone said, in his opening speech, that the subject was the most difficult and complex with which he had ever had to deal. But the foundation of his proposals was the "three F's." The rest was machinery and detail. Dismissing as "public plunder" some wild schemes which had been put forward in Ireland, the Prime Minister acquitted Irish landlords as a class of doing injustice to their tenants. Confessing that his own Act of 1870 had proved inadequate, he described the "land hunger" of the Irish people upon the one hand, and their liability to extortion upon the other, as two sides of the problem to be solved. In 1870 Ireland was comparatively quiet, and the minds of thoughtful Englishmen were directed to the position of the Irish tenant. Now Ireland was seriously disturbed, constitutional freedom was in abeyance, and politicians had been thinking of anything rather than the Irish land laws. The only materials upon which the Government could work were the Reports, "a litter of Reports," seven in all, issued by the Duke of Richmond's and Lord Bessborough's Commissions. Ministers had adopted in substance the recommendations made by a majority of the

[1] Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 303.

one and a minority of the other. A Land Court, or in the language of the Bill a Land Commission, was to fix a fair rent, known as a judicial rent, for fifteen years where either the tenant or the landlord applied to the Commissioners. In fixing the rent they would have regard not merely to the value of the holding as it stood, but also to the time, money, and labour spent upon it by the tenant, or his predecessor in title. A rent judicially settled could not be changed again within the statutory period, and the right to hold the land at the rent so fixed was made a marketable commodity. At the end of the fifteen years the same process could be repeated, and no tenant whose holding was worth less than two hundred pounds a year could exclude himself by voluntary contract from the advantages of the new law. In his speech upon introducing this Bill Mr. Gladstone made use of language which was strangely perverted into a repudiation of economic science. Referring to the Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, a member of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, the Prime Minister said, "Mr. Bonamy Price is the only man — to his credit be it spoken — who has had the resolution to apply, in all their unmitigated authority, the principles of political economy to the people and circumstances of Ireland exactly as if he had been proposing to legislate for the inhabitants of Saturn or Jupiter." The phraseology is awkward, but the meaning is plain enough, and would have been accepted by David Ricardo himself. An abstract proposition, such, for instance, as that prices are regulated by supply and demand, is useless for practical purposes to a man who does not know the amount of effective demand and available supply. What separated Professor Price from all his colleagues, Liberal and Conservative alike, was that he confounded in one single formula a country like England, where land

1881.

Political economy.

1881. ready for cultivation was let to the highest bidder in the market, and a country like Ireland, where the farmer prepared his land for cultivation himself, and held it by customary tenure. When Mr. Gladstone was accused of "banishing political economy to Saturn," he had done no more than point out the difference between a principle and a fetish. "The not distinguishing when things should be distinguished, and the not confounding when things should be confounded, is the cause of all the mistakes in the world." [1] The only other prominent feature of the Bill was a set of clauses empowering the Commissioners to advance three-fourths of the purchase money for tenants desirous of purchasing their farms, in furtherance of the proposals contributed by Mr. Bright to the Church Act of 1869 and the Land Act of 1870.[2]

Resignation of the Duke of Argyll.

The first result of the Irish Land Bill was the resignation of the Duke of Argyll, who, like Bonamy Price, could not see the economic difference between Great Britain and Ireland. Although the Duke's office was a sinecure, and he himself was rather a philosophic theorist than a practical statesman, yet as an orator he had in the House of Lords neither equal nor second, and it was certain that if his brilliant powers of invective were not engaged on one side, they would be exercised on the other. He could say with perfect truth that no such Bill was contemplated when he joined the Cabinet, for even Mr. Gladstone himself described early in the year as "incredible" a rumour that the Bessborough Commission would report in favour of the "three F's." Lord Carlingford, a member of the Duke of Richmond's Commission, who had voted with a minority of his colleagues for the main

[1] Selden's *Table Talk*, edited by Reynolds, p. 160.

[2] The first Commissioners appointed by Parliament were Mr. Justice O'Hagan, Mr. Litton, Liberal Member for Tyrone, and Mr. Vernon, a Land Agent, supposed to represent the landlords.

principles of the Bill, succeeded the Duke of Argyll as Privy Seal, and thus returned to the Cabinet in the nick of time. 1881. Lord Carlingford's appointment.

Between the first and second reading of the Bill the Irish party decided, or rather Mr. Parnell decided for them, that they would not vote for it.[1] They were in a difficult position, and Mr. Parnell's tactics were certainly capable of defence. That the Bill was a good one they could not deny, and to have voted against it would have stultified themselves. On the other hand, they were at open war with the Government, who had put them to silence, turned them out of the House, and imprisoned some of their friends before adopting their agrarian policy. Parnell's tactics.

The House of Commons was itself again when the Land Bill came on for second reading after the Easter recess. Urgency had disappeared with coercion, and debates on the Land Bill could not be curtailed. They occupied fifty-eight sittings, or more than twice as many as the Land Act of 1870. The discussion of the second reading lasted for eight nights, and elicited nothing that was specially memorable except Mr. Bright's famous declaration of "prairie value." If, said he, a map were made of Ireland, stripped of everything the tenant had done, and marking only what had been done by the landlord, it would be like an American prairie, "bare of house and barn, fence and cultivation."[2] During this debate Mr. Forster was so unwise as to arrest Mr. Dillon, who had urged the people to join the Land League and resist the landlords. Mr. Dillon's language was violent, and he probably April 25. Bright's prairie value. Arrest of Dillon. May 2.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 294–295.

[2] Mr. Bright's language was rhetorical and general. There were some "English-managed" estates in Ireland, notably the Duke of Devonshire's, where permanent improvements had always been made by the landlord, and these were in terms exempted from the operation of the Act. See 44 & 45 Vict. c. 49, Section 8, Subsection 4.

1881. desired his own arrest. But Mr. Forster might have remembered the contrast drawn by a great historian between two successive Kings of England. When James the Second refused to remit the cruel and illegal sentence of flogging passed upon a Republican clergyman, he said, "Mr. Johnson has the spirit of a martyr, and it is fit that he should be one." "He has set his heart upon being a martyr," said William the Third of an acrimonious Jacobite, "and I have set mine on disappointing him." "These two speeches," observes Macaulay, "would alone suffice to explain the widely different fates of the two princes." [1] When the Bill came at last to be read a second time, the collapse of the Opposition was startling and complete. Notwithstanding Irish defections, the Ministerial majority was exactly two to one. The hostile amendment was Lord Elcho's, and the Whips of the Conservative party did not tell in the division. But Sir Stafford Northcote voted in the minority, and the result was not conducive to his influence over his followers. In Committee the Government continued to hold more than their own, and their most dangerous enemies were the Parnellites. The plain truth is that neither Sir Stafford Northcote nor his colleagues understood the details of the clauses. They were in the same boat with most of their opponents, and with Mr. Parnell himself. Only three men in the House had thoroughly mastered the Bill. One was the Prime Minister; another was the Irish Attorney-General, Mr. Hugh Law; the third was Mr. Timothy Healy, Member for Wexford, a clever young Irish barrister and a Parliament man by nature. It seems to have escaped the notice of public writers that the circumstances of Irish representation bring into the House of Commons at an early age men who, if they are moderately

May 19. Vote on the second reading.

[1] Macaulay's *Works*, i. 604.

prudent, may retain their seats for life. They grow up, like Members for the pocket boroughs of old, in a Parliamentary atmosphere, and acquire a dexterity in debate which nothing else can give. Of this class Mr. Healy was an extremely capable specimen, and no one was better able to carry out Mr. Parnell's policy of criticising without imperilling the Land Bill. 1881.

When the Bill reached the House of Lords at the end of July, Lord Salisbury was not more fortunate than Sir Stafford Northcote. It was the first time that he had been called upon to act a prominent part as Leader, and the situation was one of considerable interest. The measure effected a complete change in the agrarian law of Ireland, it was regarded by old-fashioned Conservatives as revolutionary, and it was infinitely more important than the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. It had not been before the constituencies, nor had its general policy been so much as mentioned to them. The doctrine of a "mandate" from the electors to the House they elect belongs to the extreme school of Continental Jacobinism, and cannot be reconciled with any possible theory of the British Constitution. At the same time the Lords have often claimed the right to test the issue whether on a particular subject the Commons represent the nation, and here was an opportunity. Either the size of the majorities in the other House, where Lord Elcho could only find thirteen to vote with him against the third reading, or perhaps the condition of Ireland, inspired Lord Salisbury with prudence, and he allowed the second reading, moved by Lord Carlingford, to pass unchallenged. The Duke of Argyll, however, always cock-sure, took the opportunity to compare his old colleagues with a row of jellyfish, destitute of backbones. In Committee the Bill was torn to pieces, and, after the Commons had

The Land Bill in the Lords.

1881. mended it, it was torn again. But at this point the Lords remembered that poor creature discretion. Aug. 16. They ceased to press their amendments, and before Aug. 22. the end of the month the Bill was law. Mr. Gladstone's conduct had been recognised on all hands as masterly, and whether we consider the indifference of the British public or the complexity of the measure itself, his personal triumph in passing it must be reckoned the greatest legislative achievement of his career. A general conversion of tenants into landlords may of course supersede it. But so long as the system of dual ownership remains, the Charter of the Irish tenant must be the Land Act of 1881.

Gladstone's triumph.

While the Irish Land Bill was slowly passing into law, the Chief Secretary for Ireland was gradually finding out that he had been misled by the police. They told him that, if they had the power, they could restore order by arresting the persons responsible for disturbance. They were mistaken. The forces with which they had to deal were far better organised than they supposed, and their "village tyrants," or "village ruffians," were not the authors of the mischief. A few days after Mr. Dillon, who was not exactly a village ruffian, had been put under lock and key, Father Sheehy of Kilmallock was also imprisoned on suspicion of treasonable practices. It was not two months since Sheehy had rescued from a mob a couple of reporters employed by the Castle, and his arrest seemed to be wanton. Priests, like other citizens, must be subject to the law. But in Ireland the person of a priest is held sacred, and no prudent Minister would needlessly exasperate the people by proceeding against a priest without a cause. The fact is that Mr. Forster was growing desperate. His weapon had broken in his hands, and he felt that he could do no more. "It is seriously to be

Arrest of Father Sheehy. May 20.

thought of," he told his adopted daughter, on the 12th of June, "whether, after the Land Bill is passed, I should not get out of it all. The Cabinet would make arrangements for me. I can never do now what I might have done in Ireland."[1] Still his sense of duty chained him to his post, and he went doggedly on. After the Land Bill had become law Mr. Gladstone was anxious to try conciliation, and pressed for Father Sheehy's release, which occurred early in September. Ministers were not alone in their perplexity. Mr. Parnell, the successful rival of Mr. Forster in the government of Ireland, was also at a loss. He wished the Land Act to succeed, and at the same time he did not wish to quarrel with "his American allies, whose contributions filled the coffers of the League."[2] In the middle of September the Land League held a Convention in Dublin, and resolved that test cases of tenants who had not been highly rented should be submitted to the Land Court. Until these cases were decided, no tenant was to go before the Court. The object of this policy, Mr. Parnell informed the President of the Land League in America, was to show the hollowness of the Act. The truth of the statement may be doubted, for Parnell was playing a double game. It was, however, the view taken by the Government, and a few days afterwards Forster wrote to the Prime Minister strongly urging Parnell's arrest. Mr. Gladstone thought that such a step should not be taken without consulting the Cabinet, and meanwhile he himself made a significant speech at Leeds. The part of it which had immediate importance was his declaration that Parnell stood between the living and the dead for the purpose not of stopping but of spreading the plague, and

1881.

His release.

Sept. 17.

Sept. 26.

Oct. 6.

[1] Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 324.
[2] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 302.

1881. his memorable hint that the resources of civilisation were not exhausted. At that time both he and Forster were agreed that a blow should be struck at the League in the person of Parnell. But the Cabinet did not meet till the 12th of October, and before that day Mr. Parnell replied at Wexford to the Prime Minister in language of uncompromising defiance. He was probably speaking rather for the Irish in America than for the Irish in Ireland when he described Mr. Gladstone as a "masquerading knight-errant," prepared to carry fire and sword into Irish homesteads. He did not know, though he may have suspected, that his arrest was already in contemplation, and that Mr. Forster was making arrangements at Dublin Castle for the purpose. The Chief Secretary took no one into his confidence except the Commander of the Forces, Sir Thomas Steele, who was to act on receiving by telegraph the single word "Proceed." The critical Cabinet, which Forster attended, was held on the 12th. His account of Ireland was a gloomy one. Although he had already put more than two hundred persons in prison without a trial, there had been more than four hundred agrarian crimes in September. So far Coercion had failed. Mr. Forster's remedy was to strike higher than he had struck hitherto, and he carried the Cabinet with him. The necessary message was sent to Sir Thomas Steele, and early on the morning of the 13th Parnell was apprehended at Morrison's Hotel, from which the police took him to Kilmainham prison. The great exasperation which this stroke produced in Ireland was intensified by the Prime Minister. As ill-luck would have it, he was to receive that very day the Freedom of the City at the Guildhall, and the crowded assembly there gathered heard for the first time of Parnell's arrest from Mr. Gladstone's lips. The wild outburst of

Arrest of Parnell.

applause which greeted the announcement is said to have surprised Mr. Gladstone himself, whose own words and demeanour were temperate and dignified. It is easy to understand his frame of mind. By dint of almost superhuman exertions he had accomplished a great work of justice to Ireland, and he saw, as he thought, the whole of Mr. Parnell's vast influence with the Irish people being used to frustrate the Land Act. No one who has studied either Mr. Gladstone's character or the history of the time will believe that his policy was guided by personal jealousy or resentment. But the greatest of men, simply because they are human, are unfit for arbitrary power, and it may be doubted whether in arresting Mr. Parnell on suspicion of treasonable practices the Irish Government did not strain even the wide scope of the Act suspending *habeas corpus* in Ireland. Mr. Parnell's attempt to hinder and discredit the operation of the Land Act may have been unwise, and even unpatriotic. But was it a treasonable practice? If so, the Anti-Corn Law League and the movement against compulsory Church Rates contained pretty large elements of treason. "We arrested Parnell," said Lord Cowper with engaging frankness, "because we thought it absurd to put lesser men into gaol and to leave him at large. Furthermore, we thought that his test cases would interfere with the working of the Land Act." [1] That is rather the straightforward utterance of an English gentleman than the deliberate judgment of a constitutional Whig. It is of course true that Parliament had temporarily put Ireland outside the pale of the Constitution. But the statute which did so was aimed at incitement to murder and resistance to law, not at ingenious combinations for political purposes. However popular Mr. Par- 1881.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 314.

1881. nell's arrest may have been in England, its effect in Ireland was deplorable. Blinds were drawn down; shops were closed; the name of England became more unpopular than it had been since the Union.[1] Mr. Parnell took it quietly enough. His confinement was indeed made as agreeable as circumstances admitted. He read the newspapers. He played chess. He smoked good cigars.[2] He communicated freely with his friends, and three of his colleagues in Parliament were soon sent to keep him company.[3] But confinement and want of exercise were serious trials to active men, depressing their spirits and affecting their health. The result of these arbitrary measures was worse than useless. It was positively mischievous. "Who will take your place if you are arrested?" some one asked Parnell. "Captain Moonlight," was the reply.[4] This biting sarcasm must not be taken as expressing the literal truth. There had been plenty of "moonlighting," or midnight outrages, before Mr. Parnell saw the inside of Kilmainham, and he had not raised a finger to stop them. Nevertheless, it is true and significant that outrages, including murders, increased after the Land League had been deprived of its head.

No Rent Manifesto. The Parnellite answer to Mr. Forster's warrant was the No Rent Manifesto, signed by Parnell and six of his colleagues, which appeared in Mr. William O'Brien's paper, *United Ireland*, on the 17th of October. This document adjured the Irish tenants to pay no rent at all until the constitutional rights of the Irish people were restored. Mr. Dillon, though he signed it in deference to the

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 317. [2] *Id.* 316.

[3] Mr. Dillon, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. O'Kelly. Mr. Dillon had been released on account of ill-health, and was now imprisoned for the second time. Mr. Sexton was one of the ablest men among the Parnellites, and quite their most eloquent speaker.

[4] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 312.

majority, was opposed to it, believing that the Church of Rome would not support a repudiation of debts. He was right. The Bishops and priests condemned it. The people ignored it. It fell absolutely flat.[1] The next link in the chain of unwisdom was forged by the Chief Secretary. He proclaimed the Land League as an illegal Association, and announced that its meetings would be suppressed by force.[2] This step Mr. Forster took without consulting his colleagues, who had some reason to complain. For if a Cabinet is not to have opinions, and to express them, upon the fundamental policy of administration, the principle of collective responsibility disappears. No proclamation by any Minister could make the Land League illegal, or could be more than a warning. Mr. Forster had, besides the opinions of his Law Officers, the charge of Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, delivered at the State Trials in January, when he pronounced against the legality of the League. The *obiter dictum* of a Judge is not authoritative unless it be necessary to the decision of the case which he is trying. In this case, however, the defendants were all prominent members of the body now proclaimed, and Mr. Forster's legal defence is much stronger than his plea for independent action. On the very day that this proclamation was issued the Land Commissioners sat for the first time in Dublin, and the clerk, by an unlucky slip of the tongue, declared the "Court of the Land League" to be open. More serious offence was given by the heretical declaration of Mr. Justice O'Hagan that a tenant should be able to "live and thrive." That the landlord should live and thrive at the expense of the tenant was quite in the nature of things. The opposite

1881.

Proclamation of the Land League, Oct. 20.

Opening of the Land Commission.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 319–320.
[2] Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 357.

1881. doctrine seemed to verge upon Socialism, and to infringe upon political economy. The Court, however, at once set to work, and cut down rents on an average of rather more than 20 per cent. It was impossible that the Chief Commissioners should do all the work themselves, and Sub-Commissioners, selected by Mr. Forster with anxious care, held local inquiries, making a practical examination of the soil, and applying what Lord Salisbury called the "umbrella test." Meanwhile the Ladies' Land League, of which Miss Anna Parnell, sister of the imprisoned leader, was President, took the place of the proclaimed organisation, whose funds had been conveyed to Paris by its treasurer, Mr. Patrick Egan. A lamentable tale of outrage, and even murder, followed. With constant and fatal persistence crime dogged the steps of coercion. During the one month of October three murders, all undoubtedly agrarian, were committed in the province of Munster alone. Again Mr. Forster began to speak of resignation,[1] at the
Nov. 20. same time suggesting to the Prime Minister that the Protection Act might have to be renewed. Mr. Gladstone encouraged him, and he had much need of encouragement, for he enjoyed the confidence of no class, nor of any party, in Ireland. By Home Rulers, and by the bulk of the peasantry, he was attacked as the enemy of the nation. The Tory landlords, or many of them, distrusted him as a Liberal, and a member of the Cabinet responsible for the Land Act. Mr. Gladstone complained, not without justice, that the landed gentry of Ireland expected the Government to do everything for them and would do nothing for themselves. In theory Mr. Forster was as absolute as the Emperor of Russia. In practice he was powerless to prevent the continuance of terrorising crime.

[1] Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 368.

Although the men in Kilmainham had not exerted themselves as they should to keep their movement within the limits of the moral law, their influence was better than pure anarchy, tempered by locking up the wrong people. The columns of outrages supplied by the police were not always trustworthy. Mr. Forster himself wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "Many of the nightly attacks are shams, got up as an excuse for non-payment of rent"; "but," he added, "there are others of great atrocity."[1] He was indefatigable in the work of prevention, assigning to the worst districts six special magistrates, of whom the best known were Mr. Blake[2] and Mr. Clifford Lloyd, an able man, whose zeal sometimes outran his discretion.[3] 1881. Dec. 11.

When Parliament met, the state of Ireland was almost as bad as it could be. Another new and odious word besides "boycotting" had been imported into the English language. The number of "suspects" imprisoned because the police chose to believe that they had been guilty of some crime was set forth in official returns. Of these suspected persons there were hundreds in Irish gaols, and yet the outrages went on. It was plain that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act had failed, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the special organ of educated Radicals, demanded a change of policy. There were, however, in Ireland two satisfactory phænomena. The Land Courts were crowded with applicants, and the No Rent Manifesto had failed. A visitor to Kilmainham asked Mr. Parnell how this document was operating. "All I know about it," he replied, "is that my own tenants are acting strictly up to it."[4] A Feb. 7, 1882. Increase of Irish crime.

[1] Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 377.
[2] Afterwards Sir Henry Blake, the Colonial Governor.
[3] He issued a circular, which had to be withdrawn, advising the police not to be too particular or discriminating in their arrests.
[4] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 335.

1882. diabolical attempt was made to injure the Chief Secretary by an explosive letter, and his life was in considerable peril. Fear he never showed. If he had been as wise as he was good and brave he would have solved the Irish problem, but he kept at arm's length those who could have aided him in the solution, and relied upon the police. With three of their colleagues in custody[1] the Irish Members at Westminster were angry and threatening. From Mr. Gladstone, however, they met with more sympathy than they could have expected. In the course of a debate on Home Rule, which took the form of an amendment to the Address, he said that he would welcome any measure of self-government for Ireland which was not incompatible with imperial unity. This expression of opinion was attacked by Mr. Plunket, and eulogised by Mr. Sexton, as marking a step towards Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone did not repudiate the charge. For the moment, however, more exciting topics put it aside. To make confusion in Ireland worse confounded seemed impossible. But to a privileged body with a grievance all things are possible. The House of Lords, on the motion of an Irish Peer, appointed a select Committee to inquire into the operation of the Irish Land Act, passed less than six months before. In vain did the Lord Chancellor point out that to examine judicial functionaries about their decisions was unconstitutional. The only answer to him was a majority of 43, which included twelve Liberal Peers. Members of the Government declined to serve on the Committee, and it was settled by the Cabinet that Mr. Forster should not give evidence before it.[2] There the matter might well have

Gladstone and Home Rule.

Lords' Committee on the Land Act. Feb. 17.

[1] Mr. Sexton had been released on account of his health.

[2] A Member of one House is not amenable to the jurisdiction of the other.

rested. For the Lords seemed to most people like the impatient child, who pulls up a flower planted a week before to see how it is growing. There was, however, some risk that the operation of the Land Act would be interrupted if Commissioners were brought over from Ireland to be cross-examined at Westminster, and that confidence in the Act would be shaken. Mr. Gladstone therefore deemed it necessary to propose in the House of Commons what was really a vote of censure on the House of Lords, and three nights were spent in debating it before it was carried by a majority of 68. The time, however, was not altogether wasted. For the Leaders of the Conservative party in the Commons, who were of course acting with Lord Salisbury, and with Lord Cairns, the Chairman of the Committee, disclaimed any intention to interfere with the working of the Act or with the judicial authority of the Commissioners. It was a case for compensation to landlords which they really desired to get up, although the Irish landowners had lost less rent by statute than the English landowners had lost without one, and though it was due to the Land Act that they were getting any rent at all.

1882.

Gladstone's counter-resolution.

March 9.

While the quarrel between the two Houses over the Land Act was in progress, Mr. Forster paid a visit to County Clare, reputed by the police the worst in Ireland. The people admired his pluck in coming, and received him with the natural courtesy of the Irish race. He saw with his own eyes the victim of a most savage and cruel murder, who had been shot in the presence of his wife and children and was slowly dying. His wife had implored the wretches to spare him, and they had answered by firing a gun so close to his leg that the bone was shattered. Such a sight makes more impression upon a kind-hearted man like Forster

Forster's tour in Ireland.

1882.

His speech at Tullamore.

than any number of arguments or any amount of rhetoric, and Forster never forgot this poor man Moroney. He referred to the tragedy at Tullamore in King's County, where he addressed the inhabitants from a window, and told them in a manly fashion what he thought of such deeds and of the moral cowardice that permitted them. Unfortunately Coercion did not prevent them, nor did Forster's tour produce any permanent effect. The masked moonlighters who broke into houses and terrorised the country were not in Kilmainham nor in any other prison. The "suspects" were now nearly nine hundred, and still the outrages went on. Mr. Gladstone became restless. The Parliamentary situation was difficult and embarrassing. Ever since Lord Mayor's Day in 1881 the Prime Minister had laid stress upon the urgent need for a reform of procedure in the House of Commons if real business was to be accomplished. He had put upon the paper a number of Resolutions, of which the first and most important embodied the principle of closing debate at the suggestion of the Speaker by a sufficient majority. The Conservatives naturally opposed so great an innovation, and the Home Rulers supported them because the closure had been used against Ireland. If Mr. Gladstone allowed himself to be moved from his purpose to enforce the law by dread of a hostile division he was clearly wrong. But he had colleagues in the Cabinet who disliked Coercion even more than he did; it had quite obviously failed; and on the other hand rents were being much better paid since the Land Act passed. For the first time the Conservatives seemed inclined to act with the Parnellites against the Government. They voted together on a critical amendment involving the principle of the closure, and Mr. Gladstone had a majority of only 39. A Conservative

Conservatives and Parnellites.

Member[1] gave notice of a motion for bringing the suspected prisoners to trial. Sir Richard Cross[2] put down an amendment, which must have had the sanction of Sir Stafford Northcote, for the release of the three Members. 1882. March 30.

The Easter Recess was a period of gloom and doubt. Irish agrarian crime was rampant, while Irish gaols were full of untried men. The Government of the United States demanded the liberation of those "suspects" who were American citizens. On the last day of March a land-agent named Herbert was murdered in County Kerry, and on the 2nd of April Mrs. Smythe was killed by a shot aimed at her brother-in-law, a landlord in Westmeath. The *Pall Mall Gazette* recommended Forster's dismissal, and once more he offered to resign. "If you go, and go on Irish grounds, surely I must go, too," was Mr. Gladstone's reply.[3] Forster's six special magistrates all brought him bad reports. Strong and immediate legislation was in his opinion required. Lord Cowper, a week later, expressed in still more earnest language the same view. But that view was not Mr. Gladstone's, and the Prime Minister had been turning in his mind what alternative he could suggest when there was made to him an unexpected communication. While spending the Easter Recess in Dublin (Easter holidays he had none), Mr. Forster received from Mr. Parnell an application for leave to attend the funeral of his sister's son in Paris. He at once gave the required permission, on the understanding that advantage would not be taken of it for political purposes, and Mr. Parnell left Kilmainham. He did not return for a fortnight, and a good deal of history April 4–17. April 8. April 12. Parnell's release on parole. April 10.

[1] Sir John Hay.

[2] Mr. Secretary Cross had received the Grand Cross of the Bath on the resignation of Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry in 1880.

[3] Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 413.

1882. had been made in the meantime. He had now been six months in prison. The conditions were not unnecessarily onerous, and he never at any time complained of them, nor asked to be set free. But he was a young, ambitious man, fretted by inaction, and liberty is dear to all. He was jealous of power, and the control of Irish politics had entirely slipped from his hands. The Land League had been superseded by secret societies, useless for any good purpose, though fruitful in crime. The Land Act had triumphed over the No Rent Manifesto, and open resistance to the law had ceased. On the other hand, the abominable acts of vengeance which were from time to time committed injured the cause of Home Rule as much as they shocked humanity. The facts of Parnell's career do not warrant the belief that he had a sensitive conscience. If outrages served his purpose, he would not go out of his way to prevent them. But moonlighting did more harm than good, and he had had enough of it. While Mr. Gladstone, at the suggestion of Mr. Childers, was instructing Mr. Forster to draw up a Bill for giving Ireland Provincial Councils,[1] Mr. Parnell had taken up the more immediately practical question of arrears. There were in Ireland a hundred thousand small tenants who could not take advantage of the Land Act because they had not paid their rents. From his cell, or rather sitting-room, in Kilmainham Parnell drafted a Bill for wiping out these arrears by a grant of public money, and thus enabling the small tenants to go before the Court. It was clear that no such Bill would have any chance of passing without the support of the Government. Of Mr. Forster he had no hope. But he did not despair of making a favourable impression upon Mr. Gladstone and

The question of arrears.

[1] See Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 421.

Mr. Chamberlain. The day he left Ireland he met at Willesden Junction his lieutenant in the House of Commons, Mr. Justin McCarthy, the distinguished historian and novelist, with whom he communicated freely on the subject. On the morrow in London he saw a personal friend, also a Member of Parliament,[1] who wrote a few days afterwards to the Prime Minister and to the most Radical of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone replied in civil but ambiguous terms, intimating that he would consult Mr. Forster. Mr. Chamberlain sent an answer which deserves to be studied by all politicians as a model of tact and sense.[2] The gist of it was that, while the Government and the Liberal party were bound to show respect for representative opinion in Ireland, the leaders of the Irish party ought on their side to refrain from affronting the public conscience of England and Scotland. Mr. Forster's response to Mr. Gladstone was discouraging. He did not like the proposals. He did not like the intermediary. He had been passed over, and he resented the slight. While not unwilling to deal with the question of arrears, he considered that it would be unsafe to open the doors of Kilmainham until Ireland was pacified, or a fresh Coercion Act had been passed, or Parnell and his friends had promised to abstain from intimidation in the future. The letter in which Forster expressed these opinions was written from Dublin on the 18th of April, the day after the Easter Recess. At that moment he was in imminent danger of a violent death. It had been arranged that on the evening of the 19th he should leave Westland Row Station to catch the night boat for Holyhead. But while he imprisoned the agitators,

1882.

Parnell's overtures.

[1] Captain O'Shea, Member for Clare.
[2] See O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 338–339.

1882. Forster's escape. he let the murderers go free, and a gang of desperate men waited for him on the platform. If he had carried out his intention, he would undoubtedly have been killed. At the suggestion of his private secretary, made in perfect unconsciousness of the grim reality, he took an earlier train, dined at Kingstown, and escaped death. On his April 22. arrival in London he found that the Cabinet were willing to communicate with Parnell through Mr. Chamberlain, and that he himself was practically superseded. Mr. Parnell's Arrears Bill, which was in Mr. Redmond's hands, came on for second April 26. reading two days after its author's return to Kilmainham, and Mr. Gladstone himself, though declining to vote for it as it stood, acknowledged in a sympathetic speech the duty of legislating for the smaller tenants. Two days later the resignation Lord Cowper's resignation. of Lord Cowper, which had been for some time rumoured, was announced, and the President Lord Spencer's appointment. of the Council, Lord Spencer, who had been Viceroy in Mr. Gladstone's first Government, was appointed to succeed him. Lord Cowper had long been anxious to rid himself of an irksome office, in which he had neither responsibility nor power. He had not even been consulted about the arrest of Parnell, which occurred during his absence from Ireland, and Forster treated him as the Mayors of the Palace treated the Merovingian Kings. With Lord Spencer, a Cabinet Minister, as Viceroy, things would be very different; and though Forster is said to have been anxious for the change,[1] it considerably diminished his importance in the public eye. Meanwhile the communications were proceeding, and a crisis was at hand. Parnell had already sent to Mr. Chamberlain through Mr. McCarthy his opinion that the arrears should be settled by a gift, not by a loan, and that lease-

[1] Reid's *Life of Forster*, ii. 423–424.

holders should be brought under the Land Act. Through his other friend,[1] he added that if a satisfactory Bill were passed, he and his colleagues might be able to co-operate with the Liberal party in the furtherance of Liberal principles. In neither letter did he allude to his own release or to the release of any other person. His emissary, who called on Mr. Forster in Eccleston Square, remarked that "the organisation which had been used to get up boycotting and outrages would now be used to put them down, and that there would be a union with the Liberal party." This did not satisfy Mr. Forster, who had failed to obtain the assurance he required. It did satisfy the Cabinet. The three Members of Parliament were unconditionally released, and Mr. Forster resigned. 1882.

Release of the three Members. Forster's resignation. May 2.

Mr. Gladstone accepted the Chief Secretary's resignation in a letter which contained some cloudy phrases, and one remarkable sentence. "Followed or not followed," said the Prime Minister, "I must go on." The cardinal point of the situation was that Forster's policy of imprisoning village ruffians and Parliamentary leaders had broken down. The mere fact that whereas in the first quarter of 1881 one agrarian murder was committed throughout Ireland, in the first quarter of 1882 there were six, spoke more eloquently than any words. It was not the criminal class that Mr. Forster had imprisoned. His failure was generally admitted, and could not be disputed. Lord Cowper, who signed the order of release with great repugnance, and only on the understanding that he was in no way responsible, had nothing to do with these proceedings, and in fact knew nothing about them. He said afterwards, with characteristic candour, that it "was the way the thing was done rather than the thing itself to

[1] Captain O'Shea.

1882. which Forster objected." Forster considered, no doubt, that it gave the victory to the "uncrowned King" and his "unwritten law."[1] There is some truth in this estimate. For although Parnell did not ask for his own freedom, and though "Ministers decided that they could enter into no agreement and would give no pledge,"[2] there was a mutual, if tacit, understanding which both parties thoroughly appreciated. Besides setting the three Irish Members free, and letting Michael Davitt out of Portland, the Cabinet determined to examine the list of "suspects," and unlock all who were not regarded as partakers in actual crime. Except for personal considerations, such as unauthorised interference from outside, the difference between Forster and his colleagues was a very narrow one. The "suspects," as he readily admitted, were imprisoned for precaution, not for punishment. The Government had no right to detain them a day longer than public safety required their detention, and Ministers were satisfied that Mr. Parnell would exert himself in future to prevent the commission of outrages. The definite undertaking which Forster required would have been a bargain in the proper sense of the term. As for the offer of co-operation with the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone said that he did not expect and could not accept it.[3] When Mr. Forster made his explanation in the House of Commons, nothing was said about the correspondence, and Mr. Gladstone denied, then as always, that there had been any "Treaty of Kilmainham." Ministers had acted on their own responsibility, and in what they believed to be the best interests of Ireland. Although this statement was contradicted, it was never disproved.

Release of Davitt.

May 4.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 339.
[2] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 64.
[3] Reid's *Life of Forster*, i. 440.

On that Thursday afternoon it seemed to many as if Great Britain and Ireland were at last, in fact, and not merely in law, a United Kingdom. The Irish are a generous and a quick-witted people. They understood that the Government were their friends, and they believed that both parties were anxious to do them justice. If they saw in Mr. Gladstone the author of the Land Act, the supporter of an Arrears Bill, and the statesman who had put coercion aside, they were not ungrateful for the sympathy and assistance which individual Conservatives had given them. Mr. Dillon spoke generously of Mr. Forster, and Mr. Forster showed no trace of bitterness in referring to the men with whom he had struggled so long. When the Queen opened Epping Forest on Saturday the 6th of May in brilliant weather, an Irish Member said to an English colleague, "We have entered at last upon the right path. You will hear no more of the Irish difficulty."[1] But in Ireland everything always comes too late. Mr. Forster had taken power from the Land League, and it had passed to a Murder Club. While he was deluded by the police into supposing that they knew who the instigators of outrage were, the real assassins had been maturing their deadly plans. Mr. Forster himself was safe in England. His successor, Lord Frederick Cavendish, who, as Secretary to the Treasury, had had some experience of Irish business, was a man little known to the public, though his character and ability were highly esteemed by all who had either private or official knowledge of him. Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish entered Dublin together on Saturday the 6th of May, the day on which Michael Davitt was released from Portland,[2] and the work of conciliа-

1882.

Conciliation.

Appointment of Lord Frederick Cavendish.

[1] Russell's *Gladstone*, p. 249.

[2] He was met at Dartmoor by Parnell, and a singular account he

1882. tion seemed to be complete. Having transacted business at the Castle, the Lord-Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary left for the Phœnix Park, where the Viceregal Lodge and the lodge of the Chief Secretary stand at no great distance from each other. Lord Spencer rode with a small escort, and arrived at his destination in safety. Lord Frederick hailed an outside car, overtook Mr. Burke, the Under-Secretary, at the Park gates, and walked on together with him. The police employed to watch them neglected, with a criminal negligence, to follow. The four men who had waited for Forster at Westland Row were waiting for Burke, and stabbed him to death opposite the Viceregal Lodge. Of Lord Frederick Cavendish they had never heard. But he went to the assistance of his friend, and the murderers killed him too. Then they drove away and disappeared. Never has a more disastrous blow been struck at Ireland by Irishmen. Conciliation was at an end. Great Britain and Ireland were parted once more by the mutual antagonism of centuries, which always, when it seems on the point of being extinguished, revives. To one person, in whom some feeling of revenge might have seemed inevitable, the occasion was too solemn for any sentiment below the highest. Before the power of the Christian faith all earthly differences fade away. Lady Frederick Cavendish wrote to Lord Spencer that she could give up even her husband if his death fulfilled the object of his life by doing good to his fellow-men. A priest in Connemara read these words

The murders in the Phœnix Park.

has given of the meeting. "All the way to London Parnell talked of the state of the country, said it was dreadful, denounced the Ladies' Land League, swore at everybody, and spoke of anarchy as if he were a British Minister bringing in a Coercion Bill." — O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 364.

from the altar, and the people fell upon their knees.[1] 1882.

Only the official world of London heard the ghastly news that Saturday night. On Sunday it became generally known. Outside the circle of relations and friends it struck no one harder than Parnell. When he read it in the *Observer*, he went to see Davitt at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and declared that he would leave public life. "How can I carry on a public agitation," he exclaimed, "if I am stabbed in the back in this way?" He wrote to Mr. Gladstone and offered to retire from Parliament. There could have been no good in that, as Mr. Gladstone told him. If his position had become more difficult, so much the more reason why he should remain in it. Mr. Forster, deeply affected, and feeling that the blow was meant for him, offered with chivalrous courage to go over and take up the task of Mr. Burke. The offer could not in the nature of things be accepted, and, as it happened, both vacancies thus tragically made were filled from a single Department. Mr. Burke's place was taken by Mr. Hamilton,[2] Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty, while the Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Trevelyan, became Chief Secretary for Ireland. No situation in the British Empire was less to be coveted than that of Lord Frederick's successor. But Mr. Trevelyan did not feel it honourable to decline a post of difficulty which was also a post of danger.

Parnell's offer to retire.

The new Irish Ministers.

Before the crime in the Phœnix Park, and indeed before the release of Parnell, it had been decided by the Cabinet to introduce another Coercion Bill. It was properly so called, because, since the time of Edmund Burke, that name had been given in popular parlance to any measure which increased

The Crimes Bill.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 69.
[2] Afterwards Sir Robert Hamilton.

1882. the severity of the criminal law in Ireland alone. But there is Coercion and Coercion. This new Bill, introduced by Sir William Harcourt on the evening of Lord Frederick Cavendish's funeral at Chatsworth, which had been attended by three hundred Members, did not authorise the imprisonment of any man without a trial. As originally framed there was nothing in it which even a political theorist would have called unconstitutional. A power of search, by day or by night, was given to the police. The Attorney-General received an absolute right of changing the venue from one county to another, when he thought that local considerations prevented a fair trial. Strangers, and persons found wandering at night, could be arrested and imprisoned if they did not give a good account of themselves. The Alien Act of 1848 was revived, so that the Government could remove foreigners from any part of the United Kingdom. The summary jurisdiction of magistrates, with the penalty of six months' hard labour, was spread over incitements to crime and membership of criminal societies. The Lord-Lieutenant was empowered to prohibit meetings which he considered unlawful, and to suppress newspapers which he regarded as intentionally felonious. Justices of the peace were enabled to hold inquiries, and compel the assistance of witnesses, where an offence had been committed but no offender had been found; compensation could be levied from the neighbourhood for the victim of a crime; and additional police could be sent to a disturbed district at the cost of the ratepayers. It is possible that this Bill, limited as it was to three years, might have passed with an ordinary and reasonable amount of criticism and opposition. But unfortunately the murders in the Phœnix Park produced additional clauses, unnecessary because

never employed, which challenged the resistance of representative Irishmen. These clauses abolished trial by jury in the most serious cases, including treason and murder, substituting a Commission of Judges appointed by the Lord Lieutenant. Even against this Bill, such was the effect of Lord Frederick's murder, the minority at the first reading was small, and included only four Englishmen.[1] Mr. Gladstone insisted that it should be accompanied by an Arrears Bill, which, except in one important particular, embodied Mr. Parnell's policy. Leaseholders were not brought under the Land Act. But wherever a tenant of a holding rated at thirty pounds, or below that sum, had paid the year's rent due in November 1881 and still owed past arrears, half his debt was to be paid from the surplus of the Irish Church, and the remainder was to be wiped out altogether. If the Irish Church Surplus did not suffice, the deficiency would be made good from the Consolidated Fund. Thus thousands of tenants were relieved not merely from a burden, but from a disability which shut them out of the Land Courts. Despite the "Treaty of Kilmainham," which Conservatives denounced as especially infamous,[2] the more so perhaps because Mr. Gladstone always denied its existence, the Crimes Bill of Sir William Harcourt was opposed in its later stages with not less vehemence than the Protection Bill of Mr. Forster. Mr. Dillon delivered in the most defiant manner what Mr. Gladstone called a "heart-breaking speech," and in the course of a sitting which lasted thirty hours the Chairman of Committees, Dr. Playfair, named sixteen Irish Members for suspension. A more arbitrary and high-handed act has never been

1882.

Suspension of trial by jury.

The Arrears Bill.

May 25.

July 1.

[1] Joseph Cowen, Henry Labouchere, Jesse Collings, and Thomas Charles Thompson.

[2] They did not, however, take the sense of the House upon it.

1882. committed in the House of Commons.[1] Some of the Members named were perfectly innocent, and some were actually in bed. Dr. Playfair, though an able man of science, and a genial man of the world, lacked official dignity, and seemed fitter for a lecture-room than for the table of the House. The idea that he could convict on his own impression a dozen or twenty men of conspiracy to obstruct business by speaking too often or too long was clearly preposterous, and showed that the House, for want of reform in procedure, had drifted into mere anarchy. After these indiscriminate suspensions the Parnellites withdrew under protest from the House, and the Crimes Bill passed without much further delay. Indeed Mr. Gladstone was so much embarrassed and annoyed by the zeal of the majority in forcing upon the Irish Executive a power of searching for arms at night, which Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan were willing to do without, that he obscurely hinted at resignation. Inasmuch, however, as no Government can be compelled to exercise authority which it does not consider requisite or prudent, he thought better of this half-formed design, and proceeded with the Arrears Bill, to which a series of emigration clauses were tacked. Here he came once more into conflict with the House of Lords, who had suspended their Standing Orders with alacrity to get the Crimes Bill through all its stages at once. Very different was the spirit in which they dealt with the Arrears Bill. After reading it a second time without a division they entirely destroyed it in Committee by insisting upon the consent of the landlord. The whole object of the Bill was to remove a main cause of disturbance in Ireland by taking burdens from

Constructive obstruction.

July 4.

July 7.

July 12.

The Lords and the Arrears Bill.

[1] For Playfair's own defence of himself see Reid's *Life of Playfair*, pp. 293–295.

shoulders which could not bear them, and unless the operation were to be thorough, it would be useless. Refusals would come from the worst type of landlords, who desired, and could afford, to keep their tenants in the slavery of debt. Lord Salisbury's amendment, requiring the landlord's concurrence, was carried by a majority of more than two to one, and as the House of Commons would not agree to it, the Bill was in serious jeopardy. Lord Salisbury was for standing firm. He had denounced the Bill as sheer confiscation, and a breach of the eighth commandment. He summoned a meeting of his followers and laid the case before them. They detested the Government, and had no great love for the Bill, which many of them sincerely believed to be part of a disgraceful bargain with a notorious traitor. Lord Monck, who had been added to the Land Commission for the purposes of the measure, was too Ministerial to enjoy their confidence. But the Irish landlords, who were well represented among the Tory Peers, had to consider the practical question whether they would accept a guarantee as good as gold for half their arrears of rent, or run a risk, which in many cases amounted to a certainty, of getting no rent at all. They refused to follow Lord Salisbury, he frankly confessed himself beaten, and the Bill passed as it left the Commons. It had no stronger supporters than Mr. Forster and Lord Cowper, who knew what the state of Ireland was.

1882.

July 31.

Aug. 10.

Defeat of Lord Salisbury.

Ireland practically absorbed the whole of the regular session in 1882, and even the urgent subject of Parliamentary Procedure was postponed to an autumnal sitting. Mr. Bradlaugh occupied, as was now usual, an appreciable amount of time. On the first night of the session he presented himself after the new Members to be sworn, and Sir Stafford Northcote carried against the

1882. Government a resolution forbidding him to swear.

Feb. 21. A fortnight later Mr. Bradlaugh made a fresh move, which had little to recommend it except audacity.

Bradlaugh's defiance of the House. He walked up to the table, took from his pocket a copy of the New Testament, and administered the oath to himself. Thus the profanation which the majority had sought to avoid was enacted before their eyes in an open and flagrant form. After taking a day to consider the matter, Mr. Gladstone, on behalf of the Cabinet, declined a responsibility which the House had assumed, and left Sir Stafford Northcote to do as he pleased. Sir Stafford Northcote, prudent and wary, proposed that Mr. Bradlaugh should again be excluded from the precincts. Lord Randolph Churchill, reckless and impulsive, seized the opportunity of rebelling against the timid counsels of his leader. To expel Mr. Bradlaugh from the House was the least that

Bradlaugh's expulsion. would satisfy him. Sir Stafford, good, easy man, consented, and Mr. Bradlaugh was expelled. Judging by the reduction of his majority the year before, the more sanguine Conservatives reckoned on capturing the seat at Northampton. They were disappointed. Mr. Bradlaugh was again returned, and once more Sir Stafford had to move that a

March 6. duly elected Member be not permitted to take the oath prescribed by law. Thus the House, thanks to Lord Randolph, found itself in direct conflict with the sources of its own power, and Bradlaugh, like Wilkes, was exalted into a representative of constitutional principle. In the hope that he would not again disturb the proceedings he was allowed to sit below the bar, an example of intolerance, and an emblem of right against might.

April 24. Rates and taxes. The Budget of 1882 was the tamest that Mr. Gladstone ever introduced. No remission of taxes was possible, if only because the Government had promised an imperial contribution to the highway

rates in accordance with the unsound policy forced upon another Liberal Ministry by Sir Massey Lopes ten years before. Great indeed, if not insurmountable, must have been the difficulties of the subject when a great financier like Mr. Gladstone could find no better way of reforming local taxation. It is very strange, too, that the House of Commons should have tolerated without a protest so grave a departure from economic doctrine and public thrift. The unsound, unscientific, and irregular connection between national taxes and local rates has been a standing reproach to Chancellors of the Exchequer since the year 1874. 1882.

Far more interesting, and far more important, than the Budget of 1882 was the Parcel Post introduced by Mr. Fawcett, most active and successful of all Postmasters-General. For the purpose of carrying out this excellent project Fawcett had to negotiate with the railway companies, and a very hard bargain they drove. They succeeded in securing for themselves more than half the payment, although the Government did two-thirds of the work. And, inasmuch as the proportion was fixed on the total receipts from the public, the railways drew more as the traffic increased, which is not the case with letters.[1] The public, however, paid little attention to details, and felt thankful for the convenience without troubling themselves about the money. Mr. Chamberlain's Electric Lighting Act was the first legislation which enabled Mr. Edison's great and splendid discovery to be used by public bodies for public purposes. The President of the Board of Trade was thought by the House of Lords to have considered municipal authorities too much, and private companies too little. The Peers succeeded in extending the term of leases for lighting the streets, The parcel post. Electric Lighting Act.

[1] Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, pp. 416–418.

1882. and thus modified to avoid unjust treatment of investors the Bill passed into law. More ambitious in its purpose, and wider in its scope, than these departmental measures was the Settled Land Act, of which the history is curious. Next to the repeal of the Corn Laws, Cobden's favourite project was the reform of the Land Laws. The ideal of Cobden, and of his disciple Joseph Kay, was free land, by which they meant the removal of such encumbrances upon its transfer as settlement and entail. Lord Cairns, staunch Conservative as he was, took up a subject which Liberal Governments had neglected, and introduced a Bill enabling owners of land for life, who could not of course bequeath their property, to lease it for a definite period of years, or to sell it outright. So far Lord Cairns went with Cobden and Kay. But he imposed the condition, to which they would certainly have objected, that the money realised by the sale should be invested for the benefit of the reversioner. Thus the life-owner was deprived of the most powerful motive for bringing his land into the market, and the Cobdenite ideal was not realised. The Bill, being supported by the Government, was added to the Statute Book, with the result, which its author doubtless intended, of checking an agitation disagreeable to the landed interest. If the Peers had had a family lawyer, they would have chosen Lord Cairns. A far more useful and practical piece of legislation, the Married Women's Property Act, was directly due to the Government. Although the law on this subject had been more than once amended since a married woman could not hold any property at all, except by settlement, it was still difficult for her to dispose of her separate estate by bequest, and her earnings were liable to be taken from her by a husband who earned nothing himself. By the

The Settled Land Act.

The Married Women's Property Act.

statute passed in 1882 a wife was made capable of acquiring, holding, and bequeathing any land, houses, or money, as if she were a widow or a spinster; and property which came to her after marriage, or income which she made by her own exertions, was absolutely secured to her separate use so far as law could secure it. This salutary and beneficent change, though carried with little discussion, and no opposition, in either House, was perhaps the widest and most extensive in its results that the Parliament of 1880 achieved. 1882.

During the course of this year the Indian Government, in which Major Baring was Financial Member of Council, completed the wise economic policy of Lord Lytton and Sir John Strachey by abolishing import duties on cotton goods, and on all other articles, except arms, ammunition, and strong drink. In another, and not less important, respect the Viceroy reversed the legislation of his predecessor. He repealed the Vernacular Press Act, which subjected native newspapers to a rigid censorship, and in annulling it he restored the legitimate outlet for a discontent which otherwise finds much more dangerous methods of expression. "It will cause the greatest satisfaction to me to remember," said Lord Ripon, whose Liberalism was not geographical, "that it was during my Viceroyalty that this Act was removed from the Statute Book." No attempt has been made to renew it, and it has certainly not been missed in India. Indian reforms.

CHAPTER VII

EGYPT

1881. Egypt. Arabi's revolt.

ALTHOUGH the British Empire is large and varied enough to tax the resources of British Statesmanship, it does not include Egypt; and yet Lord Granville, by the force of circumstances which he could not control, found himself, before he knew what he was about, almost as closely involved in Egyptian affairs as Lord Spencer in the affairs of Ireland. Trouble began in the autumn of 1881 with a military revolt, which, though suppressed for a time, was not really quelled. Under the corrupt rule of Ismail the soldiers had often been defrauded of their pay, and many of them were reduced to beg in the streets. Tewfik Pasha, Ismail's son and successor, owed his power to England and France, who really, though not nominally, kept him on his throne. At the same time the law of liquidation, which secured the rights of foreign bondholders, prevented the Khedive and his Ministers from devoting the whole resources of the country to the fulfilment of Egyptian needs. Moreover, the Dual Control, as established in 1879, involved the employment and maintenance of more than thirteen hundred foreigners at a cost of nearly four hundred thousand pounds. A cry arose of "Egypt for the Egyptians"; and "Ahmed Arabi the Egyptian," better known

as Arabi Bey, made himself the champion of the cause. He was a Colonel in the Army, and had a military grievance. How far he was a mutinous soldier, guided by personal ambition, and how far he was an enthusiastic patriot, burning to free his country from a foreign yoke, would admit of an easier answer if one alternative excluded the other. Be that as it may, he would have deposed the Khedive if there had been no interference from without. Tewfik, though a mild and honest, was a weak and incompetent ruler. He would have submitted to Arabi at once had not Sir Auckland Colvin, the British Controller-General, stood by him at the Abdin Palace and encouraged him to resist. He so far yielded, as it was, to Arabi's demands that Riaz Pasha, the Prime Minister, who would have hanged Arabi out of hand, was dismissed in favour of Sherif, the Assembly of Notables was summoned, and Arabi himself, created a Pasha, became Minister for War. The Governments of England and France were now convinced of the necessity for action in defence of their joint interests. The French Premier, Léon Gambetta, who would have been thought by all men capable of office if he had never held it, was eager for intervention. By his advice a Joint Note was sent to the Khedive at the commencement of 1882 assuring him of support from the Western Powers in the maintenance of his authority. The Chamber of Notables claimed the right to overhaul the Budget, notwithstanding the law of liquidation, and were encouraged by the Sultan, whom the Congress of Berlin had left Sovereign of Egypt.

1882.

Sept. 9, 1881.

Dismissal of Riaz Pasha.

The Joint Note. Jan. 6, 1882.

At this critical moment, when East and West seemed on the point of clashing, Gambetta was defeated in the Chamber of Deputies on a Parliamentary issue, and fell from power. His successor,

Fall of Gambetta.

Jan. 27.

1882. M. de Freycinet, a more adroit and pliable politician, did not share Gambetta's spirited designs. It soon, however, became apparent that Tewfik was helpless, and that Arabi was the most powerful man in Egypt. Prince Bismarck, who was no sentimentalist, and did not love the leaders of revolts, held that Arabi was at least a possible statesman, and that terms might have been made with him. On the other hand, Tewfik was the creature of the Western Powers, and they felt bound to stand by their nominee. The result was curious, and by no means what might have been expected from the success of Mr. Gladstone's crusade against the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield. The French and English fleets, which had been stationed
May 15. in Suda Bay, appeared before Alexandria. From the European point of view the immediate effect of this manœuvre was satisfactory. The Ministers came before the Khedive and did obeisance. But Arabi, who indulged himself in office with more than the licence of opposition, was not idle. Under his authority the Egyptian troops began to construct batteries, and by the end of the month the British Consul, Mr. Cookson, wrote that the town was in continual danger, as every day's delay increased the soldiers' defiance. Even the arrival
June 7. of Dervish Pasha, a direct emissary of the Sultan from Constantinople, did not check, and may perhaps have inflamed, the Nationalist or Arabist faction.

The uselessness of the allied squadron was soon
June 11. proved in a melancholy and humiliating way. The
Riots at Alexandria. Arab population of Alexandria rose against European intruders, and killed more than two hundred of them, severely wounding Consul Cookson. What was to be done now? Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville both sincerely desired to avoid entanglement in Egyptian affairs. But they could

not neglect the lives of their countrymen, which they ought to have secured before, nor the safety of the Suez Canal, the work of a French engineer, yet part of the route to India. Mr. Gladstone clung to the Concert of Europe, and the representatives of the great Powers met at Constantinople, where they exchanged diplomatic futilities, and signed a self-denying ordinance which proclaimed their good intentions to the world. Meanwhile French politicians were becoming uneasy. It occurred to them that Albion had been called perfidious, and that Bismarck had given his name to a verb which in English was translated trump. The French Government held back, and England was left alone to deal with Arabi. A month after the riot Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour was instructed to demand that the work on the fortress of Alexandria should be stopped, and the fortress itself surrendered. No notice having been taken of this summons within the twenty-four hours allowed for a reply, the Admiral fired on the forts, and speedily put them to silence, while the French ships retired to Port Said. Arabi departed with alacrity, having, before he left, liberated the convicts, who set the town on fire and pillaged it. After this atrocious crime little sympathy was felt for him, though there were still some Englishmen who wondered why the British Navy should be at the disposal either of the Sultan or of the Khedive. There were others, perhaps more numerous, who severely criticised the Government for not putting a British garrison in Alexandria before the forts were attacked. Mr. Bright took the former view, and resigned his office. The bombardment, so he assured the House of Commons, was a breach both of moral and international law. Mr. Gladstone replied, somewhat tartly, that he believed in the moral law as much as Mr. Bright, and only differed

1882.

June 22.

July 10. Sir Beauchamp Seymour's ultimatum.

Bombardment of the forts.

Resignation of Bright. July 17.

1882. on its applicability to the present case. Intervention is costly, and this instance was an example of the rule. The Prime Minister, who was also
July 25. Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked for a vote of credit, and imposed an income tax of threepence for six months, which brought up the total to sixpence halfpenny for the year. As soon as the money was obtained, troops were despatched for the purpose of suppressing a man thoroughly disloyal to the Khedive and extremely inconvenient to the bondholders. But England had to act alone, as she had acted in the bombardment of the Alexandrian forts. Gambetta exerted all his eloquence in the Chamber on behalf of French interests in Egypt and of the English alliance.
Withdrawal of France. De Freycinet was more cautious, and only applied for funds wherewith to protect the Canal. He applied in vain. A vehement expostulation from
July 29. M. Clémenceau prevailed, and the funds were refused by an overwhelming majority. M. de Freycinet thereupon resigned, and France withdrew altogether from military operations in Egypt. England then proceeded alone. Sir Garnet Wolseley landed on the 15th of August at Alexandria, where Sir Archibald Alison, son of the historian, and Sir John Adye were waiting for him. The expedition which Sir Garnet commanded consisted in the first instance of eleven thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and sixty guns. Reinforcements followed, and a contingent was sent from India, so that the total ultimately amounted to twelve hundred officers and thirty thousand men. That Arabi and his army could stand against such a force as Sir Garnet Wolseley had at his disposal was impossible. But Sir Garnet's object was to crush the rebellion with the smallest expenditure of life, and his strategy
Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. was perfect. Before he left England he fixed on Tel-el-Kebir as the spot where the issue would be

determined, and it was at Tel-el-Kebir that Arabi entrenched his men. He knew his business well enough, and four miles of earthworks confronted the English commander. Sir Garnet attacked at night, or rather at half-past one in the morning on the 13th of September. Sir Gerald Graham on the right, and Sir Edward Hamley on the left, simultaneously advanced on the Egyptians, who fled in disorder, pursued by the Indian troops. Next day Arabi was captured, and Cairo was occupied by Sir Garnet Wolseley. The British losses were in number trifling. No fewer than three thousand Egyptians surrendered, and the remainder, who had little stomach for fighting, returned to their rural avocations.[1] British troops now garrisoned Cairo, and the only real power in Egypt was the power of England. This was the last thing that Mr. Gladstone's Government desired, and the reputation which they gained abroad for having protected Egypt from an ambitious pretender was not altogether welcome to them. Avoidance of foreign complications being part of their platform, they could not be expected to rejoice over much because they had acquired by military strength the right and the duty of making themselves responsible for the land of the Pharaohs. They had also, as a comparatively small matter, to deal with Arabi. Their representative at Cairo, Sir Edward Malet, a correct and formal diplomatist, was superseded by Lord Dufferin, who promptly brought Arabi to trial. A court martial sentenced the rebel or mutineer to death, and Mr. Gladstone

1882.

Lord Dufferin's mission.

Nov. 7.

Dec. 4.

[1] The news of this easy and skilful triumph, a real strategic masterpiece, was accompanied and saddened by the story of a cruel murder. Edward Howley Palmer, Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, had been employed with two officers of the scientific corps, a gunner and a sapper, to deal with the Bedouin tribes round Gaza, and to detach them from Arabi. On the 10th of August they left Suez, only to be killed by Bedouins, who proved too strong for their slender escort.

1882. was inclined to let the law take its course.[1] But
Banishment of Arabi. milder counsels prevailed, and Arabi, with some of his comrades, was banished to Ceylon. Meanwhile England found herself in a most embarrassing position. Four years earlier she might have had Egypt almost for the asking. Now she had made herself temporary mistress of the country, while Europe waited to see what would happen, and a jealous rival in the background watched every move of the diplomatic game. Such were the circumstances in which Lord Dufferin took up the tangled skein of Egyptian politics.

The reputation of England at this moment stood justly high. Although Arabi was no great general, and his troops were ill fitted to stand against a European army, the ease, success, and almost bloodless completeness with which his movement had been put down were conspicuous and remarkable. This country had acted on behalf of Europe, and had prevented a catastrophe which might have deluged Egypt in blood. England's conduct had been really disinterested, and was acknowledged to have been so by the other great Powers. *Probitas*, says the old Roman satirist, *laudatur et alget*. Praise, not pudding, is apt in this world to be the reward of virtue. All that England got by intervening at a critical moment to save an ancient civilisation and a modern canal was a burden of vast and indefinite responsibility. Sir Garnet
Nov. 21. Wolseley and Sir Beauchamp Seymour became Lord Wolseley and Lord Alcester with general approval. But Lord Granville and Lord Dufferin were the two men upon whom the public relied to
1883. find a way out of perplexing difficulties and dangers.
Lord Granville's despatch. Lord Granville, in an able despatch, dated the 3rd of January 1883, explained to foreign Governments why England was in Egypt, and what she meant

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 85–86.

to do there. It had been Mr. Gladstone's purpose to use the authority of the Sultan for restoring peace, and to those who taxed him with inconsistency he replied that he had never disputed the competency of the Caliph to rule a Mohammedan population. But all appeals to the Sultan, even through so accomplished a diplomatist as Lord Dufferin, had proved useless, and the Porte had not contributed to the suppression of Arabi. The thirty thousand British troops in Egypt had been brought down to twelve thousand, and might be reduced still further when tranquillity, as well as peace, was restored. British occupation of Egypt was not intended to be permanent. It was to end when a stable Government had been established, to which native and European interests might be confided. "In the meantime," wrote Lord Granville, "the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness[1] imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability and progress." Lord Granville went on to propose the neutralisation of the Suez Canal, which was a very sensible step, and the establishment of representative institutions, at which every one acquainted with Egypt must have smiled. Representative institutions are perfectly adapted to Western communities, and to races imbued with the spirit of freedom, in whatsoever part of the world they may happen to reside. To the Egyptian bondslave, the fellah, liberty meant release from the fetter and the whip, from the robbery and oppression of cruel and dishonest pashas, such as Ismail and his gang of criminal accomplices. Of self-government he had no more idea than he had of the binomial theorem or the

1883.

[1] The Khedive.

1883. differential calculus. He wanted to be ruled, but to be ruled with sympathy and justice. His rulers were now, in fact though not in form, the people of England. The sovereignty of the Sultan was a mere shadow, and would not bear the strain that Mr. Gladstone put upon it. Ever since 1873, if not before, the independence of the Khedives, subject to an annual tribute, had been absolute. The Firman of that year granted to Ismail, and the Firman of 1879 renewed to Tewfik, almost all the attributes of royalty. "No delegation of sovereign power, short of its absolute abandonment, could well have been more complete."[1] Ismail had been in fact, and Tewfik remained in theory, despot of Egypt. Lord Dufferin made good use of his time in Cairo. He prohibited the use of the Kurbash, the whip by which taxes were extracted from the fellaheen. He procured the abolition of the Dual Control, and Sir Auckland Colvin became Financial Adviser, or rather Supervisor, of the Khedive. He reorganised the Egyptian army, though of course he could not make it an army in the European sense.

Feb. 6. Lord Dufferin's report. He wrote also an eloquent despatch in favour of "national independence and constitutional government," in reading which it must be remembered that he was a humorist as well as a diplomatist, and that he was serving a Liberal Cabinet, who sincerely desired to leave Egypt as soon as possible.

Changes in the Cabinet. The changes in the Cabinet at the close of 1882 strengthened the party of evacuation, if indeed there was at that time any other. Lord Derby, who became at last Mr. Gladstone's colleague as Colonial Secretary, had just spoken strongly against prolonging the occupation by an unnecessary day. Lord Hartington, who made room for Lord Kimberley at the India Office, and took over the War Office from Mr. Childers, now Chancellor of

[1] Milner's *England in Egypt*, second edition, p. 45.

the Exchequer in succession to Mr. Gladstone, 1883.
expressed an opinion that it would be over in six months. Sir Charles Dilke, the new Member of the Cabinet in place of Mr. Bright, was a Radical and a close ally of Mr. Chamberlain. In these circumstances Lord Dufferin, who had no intention of remaining in Egypt, addressed Lord Granville with sanguine assurance. The fellah, "like his own Memnon," had not "remained irresponsive to the beams of the new dawn." In consideration of his obliging responsiveness he was to have village constituencies, provincial councils, a "Legislative Council," consultative rather than legislative in its character, and a General Assembly for giving the Government advice. Lord Dufferin set out all these proposals, which were formally adopted May 1.
in an organic decree, with the utmost gravity and then, with a sort of return upon himself, imagined Egypt administered like a Protected State of India. "The masterful hand of a Resident," he exclaimed in a spirit of unconscious prophecy, "would have quickly bent everything to his will."[1] Then he left Egypt in charge of Sir Edward Malet as Consul-General, and resumed his normal functions at Constantinople. He departed under a shower of compliments, and he left Egypt apparently prosperous. Arabi was an exile in Ceylon. Sherif Pasha was the Khedive's loyal and obedient Minister. Sir Archibald Alison was in command of the British garrison. The Egyptian army, about six thousand in number, was under the fostering care of Sir Evelyn Wood. Colonel Scott-Moncrieff[2] directed the work of irrigation, and another Briton, Sir Benson Maxwell,

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, Egypt, No. 6 (1883), pp. 40–84. Lord Dufferin's institutions have, however, stood the test of time, though the native and representative part of them has no real power. See his *Life*, by Sir Alfred Lyall, vol. ii. p. 48.

[2] Afterwards Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff.

1883. superintended the native tribunals. Hitherto the British Government had made no mistakes, and Egypt had reaped only benefit from the intrusion of the foreigner. The false position in which England stood with full authority, ample power, and no legal right, had not yet led to any consequences of a serious and practical kind.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOUDAN

ENGLAND had no sooner become responsible for Egyptian affairs than a terrible epidemic of cholera devastated Egypt. Breaking out at Damietta the month after Lord Dufferin's departure, it carried off some thirty thousand people in July and August. The sanitary conditions were more than enough to account for the plague. Dead animals floated without hindrance down the Nile, and a fair brought a crowd to Damietta just at the time when noxious exhalations prevailed. The hospitals were quite inadequate, no precautions were taken against the spread of the epidemic, and before July was out it arrived at Cairo. Even there, however, no serious attempt was made to treat it on scientific principles, the simplest safeguards were neglected, and the death-rate rose to five hundred a day. A small staff of medical men sent from London under Dr. Hunter of the Army Medical Corps were systematically thwarted by the Egyptian managers of the hospitals, and the British troops would have been decimated if they had not been removed to healthier quarters outside. By visiting the sufferers in the wards the Khedive won a popularity he had never known before. But the cholera ran its course almost unchecked by human agency; and though the corpses of the victims were at length removed

1883.

The cholera in Egypt.

1883. from the canals into which they had been thrown, it was the rising of the Nile in September which finally relieved Egypt of a pestilence that might have been foreseen.

But a danger worse even than cholera was impending over the country. The dominions of the Khedive contained, besides Egypt proper, a vast and ill-defined territory extending from Assouan to the Equator, and known as the Soudan. Of these Equatorial Provinces Colonel Gordon, "Chinese" Gordon, had been appointed by Ismail Pasha to be Governor, and he ruled them justly, putting down the slave trade which was their curse. When the Western Powers deposed Ismail in 1879, Gordon was recalled on principles of false economy, and the Soudan was left to Circassians, Bashi-Bazouks, and chaos. From this welter of confusion there arose a deliverer, Mohammed Ahmed, a Mahdi, or Mussulman Messiah. Bloodthirsty fanatic as he was, this man offered the Soudanese a sort of government, and any government was better than anarchy. Before the end of January 1883 he had taken El Obeid, and made himself master of Kordofan. The Soudan was sprinkled with Egyptian garrisons, and none of them, not even Khartoum, was safe. At El Obeid, however, there had been no massacre. The Egyptian troops, under Iscander Bey, simply took service under the Mahdi, as they were ready enough to do when the fortunes of war turned against them. In the summer of 1883 there was collected at Omdurman, on the bank of the Nile opposite Khartoum, an Egyptian force of seven thousand men and thirty guns under Hicks Pasha, as he was called, a retired officer of the Indian army who had taken service with the Khedive. The Khedive's Government came to the unwise conclusion that General Hicks, "an able and

Rise of the Mahdi.

Expedition of Hicks Pasha.

dauntless man,"[1] should be employed to reconquer the Soudan. Able and dauntless as he was, he had not much hope. His communications with the Egyptian Government showed plainly enough how desperate he thought the enterprise with the means at his disposal. These despatches passed through the hands of Sir Edward Malet, and were therefore known to Lord Granville. The Cabinet were also made aware by Colonel Stewart, who knew the Soudan well, that Egypt had not the men nor the money with which to recover the possessions of Ismail. Throughout 1883 there was only one power in Egypt, and that was the power of England. Having the force and the knowledge, Her Majesty's Ministers were morally bound to prevent Egypt from rushing on disaster and a British officer from committing suicide. But the Cabinet were under a strong delusion to believe a lie. They pretended that they had nothing to do with the matter. "Her Majesty's Government," said Lord Granville, "are in no way responsible for the operations in the Soudan, which have been undertaken under the authority of the Egyptian government; or for the appointment or action of General Hicks." The Prime Minister knew, if the Foreign Secretary did not, that no diplomatic fiction will cover moral responsibility. "The faith in the power of phrases to alter facts," says a shrewd and well-informed critic, "has never been more strangely manifested than in this idea that we could shake off our virtual responsibility for the policy of Egypt in the Soudan by a formal disclaimer."[2] When Hicks left Khartoum on the 9th of September 1883, the British Government were as much answerable for his proceedings as if Lord Hartington had ordered him to go. Hicks

1883.

May 7, 1883.

[1] Wingate's *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan*, p. 74.
[2] Milner's *England in Egypt*, p. 84.

1883. went to his doom. The Mahdi filled up the wells behind him to cut off his retreat. At last he encamped in a valley entirely surrounded by woods, near Shekan, about two days' journey from El Obeid. Out of those woods came the Mahdi's men, estimated at forty thousand, and cut the Egyptians to pieces. Hicks and his own body-guard fought to the last with revolvers and swords. But the expedition had been hopeless from the first, and the men who should have stopped it were sitting in Downing Street. Colonel de Coetlogon, a British officer, was besieged at Khartoum, and a naval squadron at Suakim under Admiral Sir William Hewett seemed to be the only source of strength upon which the Khedive could rely.

Nov. 5. Destruction of Hicks's force.

If the Soudan was to be reconquered, Great Britain must reconquer it. When Hicks and his army had perished, the martyrs of make-believe, the Cabinet recognised the obligation they had previously denied, and insisted that Egypt should give up the Soudan, confining her authority to the region north of Wady Halfa, 350 miles above Khartoum, and to the ports of the Red Sea. They were assisted in forming this conclusion by the remarkable man who arrived at Cairo as Consul-General two days after Hicks had left Khartoum. Sir Evelyn Baring, for it was he, came from India, where he had been Lord Ripon's Minister of Finance, too late to prevent the catastrophe of Shekan. But he really instructed Lord Granville, who nominally instructed him, "that the Soudan must be abandoned with all possible promptitude, and that any Minister who would not fall in with this plan must go."[1] To say so was easy, though it ought to have been said before. To do so was far more difficult in November than it would

Abandonment of the Soudan.

Sir Evelyn Baring at Cairo.

[1] Milner's *England in Egypt*, p. 89.

have been in May. There were forty thousand Egyptian troops in the Soudan, and the Mahdi's victory had made their position most precarious. For the Mahdi claimed miraculous powers, he was fighting for the true faith against the infidel, and it seemed as if Allah were visibly on his side. This impression was unfortunately strengthened by another English officer, not less plucky and daring than Hicks. Colonel Valentine Baker, brother of the great explorer, Sir Samuel Baker, had been entrusted by the Khedive with the task of drilling and training an Egyptian force called by the French name of *gendarmerie*. From them he called for volunteers, and left Cairo for Suakim, which he relieved before Christmas, only to be defeated hopelessly a few weeks later in an attempt to relieve Tokar. Indeed, he was not so much defeated as routed, for his Egyptians ran away.

1883.

Defeat of Valentine Baker.

Nov. 26.

Feb. 4, 1884.

Meanwhile the Cabinet had come to a momentous decision. Public opinion was stirred by the Egyptian problem, and a cry arose for Gordon. He, it was said, knew the Soudan, and would find a way to release the garrisons. He could tame the wild tribes, as Rarey had tamed horses, and they would obey him without the application of physical force. He could bring out the garrisons without shedding a drop of blood. When a sober, rational people like the English go mad, they go very mad indeed. This "clearly supra-rational faith in an elderly engineer," as a keen observer called it at the time, is a case in point, though it may in some degree be explained by the singular nature of the man. Gordon had not always been successful. He had failed with the Basutos in 1882, and quarrelled with the Cape Government on the occasion. In China, and in the Soudan itself, he had done what no one else could do, and

Gordon's mission.

1884.

1884. his personal influence was what Americans call magnetic. In character he was more like the Galahad of the Round Table than any contemporary or historical person. Disinterested, high-minded, saintly, noble, and pure, he lived by the precepts and the standard of Christ. Insight he had, and wisdom, for his independence of the world helped him to know it as no worldling ever can. But he was not capable of acting under authority, or of adhering to instructions. He was liable to inspiration, and he felt it his duty in all circumstances to obey God rather than man. To the Mahdi his religion was anathema, and his murder would be a meritorious act. The best opinion, Sir Evelyn Baring's, was unfavourable to the despatch of this Paladin. But Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were like drowning men, ready to clutch at any straw. They urged Sir Evelyn until he at last consented. Parliament was not sitting, and the Prime Minister was at his country house. On the 18th of January 1884, a *dies nefasta* in English history, three other Members of the Cabinet met Lord Hartington at the War Office. The three were Lord Granville, Lord Northbrook, and Sir Charles Dilke. Lord Wolseley brought Gordon to them. They asked if he would evacuate the Soudan, and he said "Yes."[1] A telegraphic message was despatched to Mr. Gladstone. He at once assented, and Gordon started the same evening. It was not till four days afterwards that the full Cabinet met to approve of the decision, and by that time Gordon was at Brindisi. His first intention was to go by the Red Sea, and land at Suakim. On the way he changed his mind, and went to Khartoum through Cairo, where he procured from the Khedive his nomination as Governor-General of the Soudan.

Gordon made Governor-General of the Soudan.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 150.

Gordon held as strongly as any Minister could hold at home that the Soudan must be not only evacuated, but abandoned. "The Soudan," he said, "is a useless possession; ever was so, and ever will be so." Such was the frame of mind in which Gordon, accompanied by Colonel Stewart, entered Khartoum on the 18th of February 1884. When he left London he was charged merely to report upon the best means of evacuation and abandonment. At Cairo, of course with his own consent, he was directed, after consulting Sir Evelyn Baring, and the Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, to carry out this policy himself. No sooner had he arrived in Khartoum than Gordon proposed that Zubair Pasha should be appointed to succeed him as Governor-General of the Soudan. At the same time he issued a Proclamation authorising the maintenance of slavery, and proposed that the Mahdi should be put down by the resources of the British Empire. By recognising slavery he shocked some of his admirers, who might have reflected that slavery in the Soudan could be stopped through a British occupation alone. By his new projects of conquest he appalled the Cabinet, who had sent him for a purpose precisely the reverse. The Prime Minister was for recalling him.[1] His colleagues differed, and it is doubtful whether Gordon would have come. His plans were always changing, and he was at the mercy of sudden impulses, which might or might not be divine. Now at last Ministers began to perceive the gigantic blunder they had committed in letting loose this uncontrollable force. But it was too late. The one possible chance of escaping disaster in the circumstances was to let Gordon do exactly as he thought right. Yet they refused his request for Zubair. Zubair is

1884.

Gordon's slavery proclamation.

Refusal of his request for Zubair.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 156.

1884. described by Sir Reginald Wingate as "quiet, far-seeing, thoughtful, of iron will — a born ruler of men."[1] The objections to employing him were two. He was a ruthless slave-trader, and Gordon had killed his son. He had a stormy interview with Gordon at Cairo, and yet Gordon had a "mystic feeling" in his favour, and believed, reasonably enough, that he was the one man strong enough to stand against the Mahdi. Gordon's brother, Sir Henry Gordon, believed at that time that the General would not be safe if Zubair were sent.[2] Nevertheless in the peculiar state of the case it was the duty of the Government to send him. They had made Gordon Dictator, and a hampered Dictator can do nothing. Sir Evelyn Baring was for Zubair, and Colonel Stewart, and Nubar Pasha. "If you do not send Zubair," said Gordon, "you have no chance of getting the garrisons away." The Queen and the Prime Minister agreed that Gordon should have his wish. Mr. Gladstone's colleagues were afraid of public opinion, which on such a question
March 11 and 13. was absolutely worthless. Two Cabinets were held to consider the subject, in the absence of the Premier, who was confined to his bed. Those Ministers who sat in the House of Commons held that the House would not tolerate the appointment, though it is scarcely credible that a majority which had already rejected a vote of censure would refuse the Government of the Queen an instrument they considered essential to the safety of Egypt. Contrary to Mr. Gladstone's opinion the Cabinet rejected the proposal. Lord Granville informed Sir Evelyn Baring that the employment of Zubair could not be allowed, and the Government made their third fatal blunder in dealing with Egypt.

[1] *Mahdiism and the Egyptian Soudan*, p. 109.
[2] Introduction to *Gordon's Journals*, lvii.–viii.

For their first, which resulted in the annihilation of Hicks's force, they had been censured by the House of Lords, and acquitted by the House of Commons. But while the debate in the Lords was damaging, the majority in the Commons was small, and might have disappeared altogether if the Conservatives had boldly declared for a Protectorate of Egypt, or put forward an intelligible policy of their own. On the very day of the first debate Sinkat fell, and ten days later Tokar surrendered to Osman Digna, the ablest of the Mahdi's lieutenants. Here there was no massacre, for the garrison joined the enemy, as Egyptian garrisons were willing enough to do. Another week, and Sir Gerald Graham, who had advanced with four thousand men from Suakim, defeated Osman Digna at El Teb, and again at Tamai, though not without considerable losses of his own. At the same time began the siege of Khartoum, and communication with Gordon ceased in the month of April. The Government denied that he was in any personal danger, and events proved that they were right. Then, and long afterwards, he might have escaped if he had so chosen, but he did not choose. He considered himself bound in honour to those who were with him at Khartoum, though he met with none of the native assistance he had expected, and the fulfilment of his task seemed hopeless. Finding that the tribes would not rally to his support, Gordon led out his garrison to drive away the masses of Arabs who were clustering round Khartoum. "His men ran like hares, and were massacred. The survivors, the two commanding officers, were executed for treachery."[1] It was now apparent that Gordon could do nothing, and an expedition for his relief began to be discussed.

1884.
Feb. 12.
Feb. 19. Votes of censure.
Feb. 29. March 13.
March 16. Defeat of Gordon.

[1] Wingate's *Mahdiism*, p. 110. Gordon was not himself discouraged by this incident. "I think we are now safe," he telegraphed on the 23rd of March, "and, as the Nile rises, we shall account for the rebels."

1884. He had gone out with the understanding and assurance that no military force would be required. But what if he were wrong? He had himself changed his mind, and come to the conclusion that British honour was concerned in the relief of the Egyptian garrisons. That was not in the first instance the policy of the Government, or Sir Evelyn Baring's, or his own. But could he be left to his fate? He had come forward to help his country. Was his country not bound to save him? An expedition in the autumn was mooted. When the Cabinet met to consider it, six Ministers were for it and five, including the Premier, against it. Sir Evelyn Baring, a prudent man, not in the least disposed to a forward policy, held that preparations ought to be made for advancing when the Nile should rise. Lord Wolseley wrote to Lord Hartington to the same effect. On the 26th of May, Berber fell into the Mahdi's hands. Berber was on the direct route from Suakim to Khartoum, as well as from Cairo, and its capture was serious, for it seemed to separate Gordon, if indeed he had not been separated already, from the outer world. The Cabinet were at sixes and sevens. Nor can it be denied that, though the situation was of their own making, it was difficult and dangerous in the highest degree. Rash as they might have been, and were, in sending Gordon at all, they had taken every precaution, with his entire consent and approval, to avoid occupying or retaining the Soudan by force. Their agent had thrown them over, and the military measures which he proposed, even if successful, would involve that very reconquest which the Cabinet had emphatically disclaimed. Votes of censure might be disregarded. There is nothing very terrible, and nothing at all disgraceful, in loss of office as the price of adherence to principle. But the despatch

Project of a Relief Expedition.

April 7.

April 14.

of an army into a desert is no light matter, and to undertake it lightly is a crime. 1884.

After the fall of Berber, or at least after the news of it had reached this country, the expedition to Khartoum became a practical issue. But there were two subsidiary questions. When should it start? By what route should it go? There were three military parties, each with a route of its own. The two favourites were the ordinary passage up the Nile, and a cross journey from Suakim on the Red Sea by Berber to Khartoum. A third way through the desert of Korosko had few supporters, and was not much pressed. At the end of July a Departmental Committee of the War Office pronounced for the Nile, and at the beginning of August a vote was taken in the House of Commons. To send an expedition may have been right or wrong. On the one hand, it could be urged with truth that Gordon was in no personal danger, that his voluntary mission had failed, that he had disobeyed his instructions, that he was at liberty to return, that a policy of what Mr. Gladstone called rescuing and retiring would certainly cost a large number of valuable lives. On the other hand, public sentiment would have been shocked, and British honour compromised, by the desertion of a chivalrous soldier who had undertaken from motives of religious principle and patriotic duty a task too hard for human strength. The Government had been guilty of an irretrievable error, an error worse than any crime in its consequences to the nation, and to themselves. After the despatch of Gordon they had only a choice of evils. The worst course they could possibly take, because it combined the disadvantages of all courses, was to send an expedition too late. The Cabinet hesitated and procrastinated because they were not agreed among themselves. May 26. June 18.

1884. Great allowances must indeed be made for them, for their difficulties were almost overwhelming. It was not merely that General Officers of high repute differed about routes and strategy. The Opposition in Parliament was bold, audacious, harassing, incessant. Well would it have been for Ministers if they had been defeated in the Commons, as they were in the Lords, at the beginning of the session, and compelled to resign. It was not merely their regular opponents that they had to face. The brilliant incisiveness of Lord Salisbury's speeches, both in Parliament and on public platforms, made him a most formidable antagonist. In the House of Commons the Fourth Party repudiated the cautious Leadership of Sir Stafford Northcote, and exhausted the forms of the House in attacking or cross-examining Mr. Gladstone at every stage of the grim Egyptian drama. Often they found themselves, not always to their surprise, supported by Radicals, such as Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Henry Richard, who objected on principle to foreign intervention of any sort. They could reckon upon the votes of Irish Nationalists, who were thinking, not of General Gordon nor of the Mahdi, but of Lord Spencer, and his resolute government in Ireland. Mr. Cowen, one of the few real orators in England, never lost an opportunity of denouncing the Ministers behind whom he sat. Two Liberals of far more weight and distinction, Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen, showed that candid friendship in which the friendship is less obvious than the candour. Their criticisms, however, were genuine and conscientious, as well as powerful. Lord Randolph Churchill, whose dash and adroitness raised him to a high rank in Parliamentary debate, had plainly avowed the doctrine that it was the business of an Opposition to oppose. And it cannot be denied

that these heterogeneous forces were sometimes helped by the indiscretion of the Prime Minister. When he declared in Parliament that the Mahdi and his hordes were "rightly struggling to be free," he was playing upon words, and using a great adjective as a negative sign. To be free from Egyptian rule was doubtless the Mahdi's desire. Beyond that his idea of freedom was unlimited slave-raiding, and promiscuous slaughter of those who would not take service under him. Moreover, it was natural to ask how Mr. Gladstone, if he believed what he said, could give his sanction to a campaign in which many of these struggling enthusiasts were killed. According to him Osman Digna was rightly struggling to be free when Sir Gerald Graham defeated him at El Teb and Tamai. So was Abu Girgeh, sent by the Mahdi to take Khartoum, and beaten back by Gordon's steamers early in May. After the fall of Berber, some three weeks from this fortunate repulse, communication with Egypt was cut off, and darkness fell upon Khartoum. It is now known that Gordon did not sit still to be taken or relieved, but engaged in active operations against the enemy. His best fighting man, Mohammed Pasha, steamed up the Blue Nile about the end of August, and disposed of Abd el Kader at Gereif, and of the Sheikh el Obeid at Halifyeh. But early in September Mohammed suffered a grievous reverse at El Fun, lost half his force, and was himself cut down. Then Gordon, feeling that without assistance he could take no further action, sent Colonel Stewart, with a French Consul, M. Herbin, and a British Consul, Frank Power,[1] to Cairo. They passed Berber in safety. But at Abu Hamed their steamer, the *Abbas*, ran upon a rock, and when they landed they were murdered by Arabs.

1884.

May 12.

Isolation of Khartoum.

Murder of Stewart and Power.

Sept. 9.

Sept. 18.

[1] Mr. Power was also Correspondent of the *Times*.

1884.

Despatch of Wolseley's expedition.

At last, on the 30th of August, Lord Wolseley left London for Cairo in charge of the belated expedition to Khartoum. The House of Commons had voted, as a preliminary instalment, three hundred thousand pounds, and would of course add any further sum that might be required. When he arrived in Cairo, Lord Wolseley had ten thousand British troops at his disposal. Portable river-steamers and whale-boats were sent out with four hundred Canadian boatmen. But Lord Wolseley could not, or did not, leave Cairo for Wady Halfa till the 5th of October. Meanwhile Gordon, having parted with Stewart, remained with resolute determination at Khartoum. Then, and long afterwards, he could himself have escaped, but he characteristically declined to leave his post. "I will not give up the place," he wrote on the 17th of September, "except with my life."[1] He never ceased to regret Zubair. "Had Zubair been sent up when I asked for him, Berber would in all probability never have fallen, and one might have made a Soudan Government in opposition to the Mahdi."[2] His attitude towards the Egyptians was curious. He did not consider them "worth any *great* sacrifice,"[3] and he did not think that he should be bound to them after January 1885. This wonderful man's Journal, which he kept for two months after Stewart's departure,[4] gives strange glimpses of his inner mind, and shows flashes of self-knowledge. "I own to having been very insubordinate to Her Majesty's Government," he begins one entry, "and its officials, but it is my nature, and I cannot help it. . . . I know if *I* was chief I would never employ *myself*, for I am incorrigible."[5] He

[1] *General Gordon's Journal*, p. 45. [2] *Id.* p. 46. [3] *Id.* p. 51.

[4] Stewart kept a journal himself before that date, but it was stolen by the Arabs at his death.

[5] *General Gordon's Journal*, p. 59.

rejected with disdain the idea that any expedition was wanted to save him, to succour him, or to bring him away. "I altogether *decline* the imputation," he wrote on the 24th of September, "that the projected expedition," of which he must have heard, "has come to *relieve me*. It has come to SAVE OUR NATIONAL HONOUR *in extricating the garrisons, etc., from a position our action in Egypt has placed these garrisons*. . . . I am not the *rescued lamb*, and I will not be."[1] Gordon's opinion about the duty of England to the Egyptian garrisons is, of course, one that he was perfectly entitled to hold. But it was not the opinion of the Government, it had been expressly disavowed by Lord Hartington in the House of Commons, and Gordon had gone to Khartoum without any plan or thought of a military expedition. If the idea that he could rescue the garrisons without force was an absurdity, he himself, and such public opinion as is expressed in newspapers, shared the delusion. Gordon's last entries refer to the straits he was in, and to the smallness of the force which in his judgment was needed for the relief of Khartoum. On the 14th of December he thought that the town could not hold out for more than ten days, but that two hundred men would save it. Lord Wolseley's expedition up the Nile was unexpectedly delayed at Debbeh and Dongola. When he reached Korti, he sent Sir Herbert Stewart across the desert to Metemmeh, thus avoiding a large circular bend of the river, and greatly shortening the distance to Khartoum. At the same time General Earle started from Abu Hamed in the middle of the bend to punish the murderers of Colonel Stewart and Mr. Power. Stiff fighting followed. At Abu Klea, Stewart was attacked by an Arab force more numerous than his own, who succeeded in breaking

1884. Gordon's Journal. Dec. 29. 1885. Battle of Abu Klea: death of Burnaby. Jan. 17, 1885.

[1] *General Gordon's Journal*, p. 93.

1884. a British square; and Colonel Burnaby, of the Royal Horse Guards, author of the *Ride to Khiva*, was killed.[1] Two days later Sir Herbert Stewart[2] himself was mortally wounded, and the command devolved upon Sir Charles Wilson, Head of the Intelligence Department, best known as an explorer of Palestine, who in a novel and unexpected situation found himself hampered by difficulties on every side. While Khartoum was his object, and every hour was precious, he had a force not equal to a battalion in fighting strength, and a large number of wounded men on his hands. Four days after the battle of Abu Klea, Gordon's steamers from Khartoum appeared at Metemmeh, where they were detained till the 24th while Wilson was "making arrangements for the proper protection of his force."[3] All this time Gordon's position at Khartoum grew more desperate every hour. At the beginning of the year Omdurman had surrendered to the Mahdi, who prudently spared the lives of the garrison. Khartoum was then surrounded, and the supplies were cut off. Starvation was imminent, until Gordon allowed all the inhabitants who wished it to cross the river in boats, and join the enemy. On the 20th of January, after thousands had taken advantage of this permission, the Mahdi fired a salute as for a victory, hoping to persuade the garrison that he had defeated a British force. Gordon, however, kept a female spy, who gave him correct information, and told him of Abu Klea. He knew, therefore, that help was coming, though he could not understand why it tarried so long. A merchant of Khartoum, Bordeini Bey, who gave all his grain to the

Jan. 19. Loss of Sir Herbert Stewart. Sir Charles Wilson in command.

1885. Jan. 5.

The last days at Khartoum.

[1] In this battle the British bayonets bent, to the great scandal and reproach of the War Office.

[2] Stewart had fought with Sir George Colley at Majuba.

[3] See Sir Henry Gordon on "The Mission of Colonel Sir Charles Wilson." *Gordon's Journals*, p. lxii.

besieged force, describes with simple pathos the last days of the doomed city.[1] Gordon's hair had turned white with anxiety, and with hope constantly deferred. Hundreds who had died from want of food lay unburied in the streets. Bordeini's final interview with Gordon is unspeakably tragic. "What more can I say?" cried the General. "I have nothing more to say. The people will no longer believe me. I have told them over and over again that help would be here. But it has never come, and now they must see I tell them lies." On the 26th of January, eleven months and a few days from Gordon's arrival, Khartoum fell. In the darkness of the early morning the Mahdi's men crept up to the ditch between the White Nile and the city gate. When the startled sentries fired, the enemy were already within the lines. Farag Pasha, Gordon's second in command, escaped through another gate, which he opened, and surrendered to the Mahdi, who killed him. Gordon met the victorious besiegers in a white uniform, wearing his sword, and carrying his revolver, at the head of the palace stairs. He does not appear to have fired his revolver, or drawn his sword. As he confronted the surging crowd, he was cut down, and slain, just before sunrise, with their spears. It is believed that he only meant to use his revolver in case an attempt were made to take him alive. Death he could not avoid, and had never feared. His whole existence upon earth had been passed in devotion to God's service and submission to God's will. His wisdom, if it be wisdom, in matters of this world, was often doubtful, and it was impossible to be sure of his allegiance to any human authority. But no man ever combined in more harmonious proportions the characters of a hero and a saint.

1884.

Fall of Khartoum.

Death of Gordon.

[1] Wingate's *Mahdiism*, 163–172.

1885. Only two days before the consummation of this tragedy Sir Charles Wilson had left Metemmeh in a small, bullet-proof steamer, with about a hundred Soudanese troops. Another steamer with fifty more men accompanied him. Both boats were delayed by running on rocks, and it was not till eleven o'clock in the morning of the 28th, forty-eight hours after Gordon's death, that Khartoum was seen. Sir Charles Wilson had with him a quite inadequate force, which narrowly escaped destruction. That brief time stood between success and failure, between glory and discredit, between life and death. A heavy fire was directed against his boats from Halifyeh, on the left bank of the river, and, lower down, from Omdurman on the right. Government House at Khartoum was perceived to be a wreck, no Egyptian flag was flying, and the steamers were fired on from Khartoum itself. A message from the Mahdi announcing the fall of Khartoum was delivered to Sir Charles Wilson on the evening of the 29th. On his way back with the fatal news Wilson met Lord Charles Beresford in command of the *Safîeh*, which had been hit in the boiler by the enemy's fire. This boiler was mended by Mr. Benbow, the chief engineer, while the Arabs were actually shooting at it, and he became, as he well deserved to become, a popular hero in consequence. Otherwise the expedition was disastrous, though not more than two Soudanese on Sir Charles Wilson's boat were actually killed.

Retirement of Wilson.

Feb. 3.

The news of Gordon's death, which was correctly inferred from the fall of Khartoum, reached England on the 5th of February, and was published the next day. It caused passionate disappointment and extreme indignation. So confident was public belief in the success of the expedition that *Punch* anticipated it in a cartoon which represented Lord Wolseley

Public indignation.

shaking hands with Gordon. The truth, in such glaring contrast with this picture, was followed by an outburst of wrath against the Government, for which there had been no parallel since the Crimean winter of 1854–5. The Queen was as angry as any of her subjects. Her Majesty telegraphed, without using the conventional cipher, to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington that earlier action might have prevented the fall of Khartoum, and saved many precious lives. Mr. Gladstone, who was staying with the Duke of Devonshire at Holker, at once sat down and wrote to his Sovereign in terse, cogent language a far better defence of his policy than the laborious, unconvincing arguments he afterwards used in the House of Commons.[1] That defence was, indeed, quite inadequate, because it consisted simply in an enumeration of those obstacles which Governments exist to surmount. But it was true, and it was material to the issue, that there had been a long dispute about strategy; that the navigation of the Upper Nile was little known; that the route by Suakim and Berber had been at first by high authority pronounced the best; that the effect of the climate upon the troops had to be carefully considered; that there had been no military disaster; and that the means of information at the disposal of the Cabinet had been lamentably meagre. For the moment, however, the question was what, in the altered circumstances of the case, Lord Wolseley should be instructed to do. He was told that he must overthrow the Mahdi's power at Khartoum. General Earle, who had been on his way to Berber when the news of Khartoum's fate reached him, was sent north to Abu Hamed, which unhappily he never reached. At Kirbekan he encountered a large force of Arabs,

1885.

Gladstone's letter to the Queen.

Feb. 7. Decision to crush the Mahdi.

Feb. 10. Death of General Earle.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 167–168.

1885. and though he defeated them it was at the cost of his own life.

More votes of censure. When Parliament reassembled after an autumn session on the 19th of February, votes of censure were, of course, moved in both Houses by the Leaders of the Opposition. In the House of Lords, where Lord Salisbury had everything his own way, the majority against the Government

Feb. 26. was 121. In the House of Commons the majority in their favour was 14. There the situation was curious and complex. The Government were under double fire, which sometimes halves the risk by drawing off dangerous shots. Sir Stafford Northcote attacked them for backwardness and indecision; Mr. Morley, on behalf of the Radicals, complained that they had gone too far, and called for the abandonment of the Soudan. The minority was made up of Conservatives, discontented Whigs, scandalised Radicals, and Parnellites, who took every opportunity of protesting against the administration of Lord Spencer. The Peers, at least, voted on the merits of the case, and expressed the opinion of men unconnected with party. Scarcely any one outside the Cabinet, and not every one in it, approved of Ministerial vacillation. The verdict of public opinion, declared, and perhaps formed, by newspapers, condemned Ministers for their desertion of Gordon, though they had not in fact deserted him. For their worst crime, which was sending him out, they were not arraigned. Meanwhile Lord Wolseley had found himself quite unable with the force at his disposal to reconquer the Soudan. The only

McNeill's Zariba. March 22. action of importance after the death of General Earle was the gallant and successful defence of "McNeill's Zariba." Sir John McNeill, making a reconnaissance from Suakim, was surprised by Arabs, who broke through his Zariba, or earth-

works. They were repulsed with splendid gallantry. 1885.
But the incident was one of many proofs that the Soudan swarmed with armed bands of Mohammedan fanatics or enthusiasts, who would require an army for their suppression. Lord Wolseley did not conceal his belief that the military operation he was anxious to perform would be the most extensive which this country had undertaken since Waterloo. At the beginning of April the Cabinet decided that it would not be wise or right to accept such a tremendous responsibility, and Lord Wolseley was directed to abandon the Soudan above Wady Halfa, except the port of Suakim on the Red Sea. The proposed railway from Suakim to Berber was also in consequence given up. Mr. Gladstone's reasons, which prevailed with his colleagues, are set forth in a long memorandum, printed by Mr. Morley.[1] They were, in brief, the desire of the Soudanese to be independent, the facility of protecting Egypt below Wady Halfa against them, the unfavourable climate, and the probability that the Egyptian garrisons could make terms with the Mahdi. It is perhaps of more moment that Sir Evelyn Baring was against any further advance to Khartoum, and that Gordon had pointed out its uselessness if the town once fell into the Mahdi's hands.[2]

The Soudan evacuated.

Another restraining influence it was less convenient to avow. British relations with Russia had become extremely critical, and no one could say that it might not become necessary at any moment to defend the north-western frontier of India with all the available resources of the Crown. Early in the year 1884 the Russian Government, pursuing its steady advance through Central Asia, had occupied Merv and Sarakhs, the gates of

Russia and India.

[1] *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 555–59.
[2] See *Gordon's Journal*, p. 191.

1885. Afghanistan. The Russian Empire was thus brought within two hundred miles of Herat, and nearer India, by much the same distance, than it had ever been before. Although the Duke of Argyll scoffed at the "Mervousness" of Anglo-Indians, this movement, which had been disclaimed by Prince Lobanoff in 1882, could not be lightly regarded by responsible statesmen, and Lord

March 29, 1884. Granville sought explanations from M. de Giers, the Foreign Minister of the Czar. Russia had always repudiated any notion of interfering with Afghanistan, which she admitted to be within the sphere of British influence, and M. de Giers proposed in reply that the Afghan boundaries should be authoritatively determined by representatives of the two great Powers concerned. This reasonable and sagacious proposal, to which Lord Granville at once acceded, could hardly be carried

April 27. The Afghan Boundary Commission. Fidelity of Abdur Rahman. to any useful or practical result without the consent of the able and vigorous Prince who then ruled over Afghanistan. Abdur Rahman, though he had once been a Russian pensioner, and never forgot how much he owed in early life to Russian assistance, had been, since his occupation of Kandahar, a true friend of the Indian Government. Lord Ripon's honest and straightforward policy had converted him from a suspicious watcher of events into a firm and consistent ally. Since June 1883 his annual subsidy for defensive purposes had been fixed at twelve lakhs of rupees[1] by the Government of India, which was represented at Kabul by a Mohammedan Envoy. The Amir has left on record his sincere admiration for the "liberal-minded Viceroy, who had no prejudices against caste, colour, or creed, believing that it matters very little what colour people are when they shall stand before the Almighty God to

[1] £120,000.

answer for their doings."[1] "Throughout the whole of his Viceroyalty," he adds, "the relations between myself and the Marquess of Ripon were of the most friendly and cordial nature."[2] Unfortunately England had invaded Afghanistan, and Russia had not. But as the independence of that most independent country was now threatened from Petersburg, and not from Calcutta or from London, the Amir felt that, without alarming his jealous subjects, he might cement his alliance with the Viceroy by a personal interview, especially as he trusted the goodwill of Sir Alfred Lyall, Foreign Secretary, and Sir Donald Stewart, Commander-in-Chief. Before the proposed meeting could be arranged Lord Ripon left India, and was succeeded by the Earl of Dufferin, most dexterous of diplomatists. The difficult and delicate situation in which he found himself required just those qualities for which Lord Dufferin was distinguished. A brave man, a born soldier, and no alarmist, the Amir looked upon the progress of Russia with not unnatural apprehension. "If they once make up their minds to do a thing," he says of the Russians, "there is no stopping them, and no changing their policy. It is not the case with them, as with some other countries, that every party that comes into power can undo the work that has been done by the party before itself. Their habit of forward movements resembles the habit of the elephant, who examines a spot thoroughly before he places his foot down upon it, and when once he puts his weight there, there is no going back, and no taking another step in a hurry until he has put his whole weight on the first foot, and has smashed everything that lies under it."[3] This vivid and graphic description

1884.

Resignation of Lord Ripon. Appointment of Lord Dufferin. Dec. 8.

Abdur Rahman's opinion of Russian policy.

[1] *Life of Abdur Rahman*, ii. 116. [2] *Id.* ii. 117.
[3] *Id.* ii. 123–24.

1885. illustrates the character of the man, and the nature of the problem with which Lord Dufferin had to deal. Meanwhile the method of drawing the boundary was under discussion between Lord Granville and M. de Giers. A Joint Commission was appointed, on which Sir Peter Lumsden represented Great Britain, and Russia was represented by General Zelenoi. The British Commissioners arrived at their destination before the end of 1884. But their Russian colleagues were detained by various causes, including the illness of General Zelenoi, and M. de Giers, after himself proposing the Commission, insisted upon a preliminary agreement on most of the points in dispute. The real object of these tedious and disingenuous negotiations was to obtain the exclusion from Afghan territory of Penjdeh on the River Khushk, which the Russian traveller Lessar declared to be ethnographically a part of Asiatic Russia. Lord Kimberley, as Secretary for India, supported the Afghan contention, that Penjdeh had been part of Dost Mohammed's dominions, and it was occupied as a precaution by an Afghan force. The Russians came into such dangerously close proximity that a formal agreement was drafted by Lord Granville and M. de Giers, under which Russia promised not to go further, "provided the Afghans did not advance or attack, or unless in case of some extraordinary reason, such as Penjdeh." This understanding, however, did nothing for the delimitation of the frontier, and matters assumed a very serious aspect indeed. While Sir Peter Lumsden waited for the Russian Commissioner, who did not come, two Army Corps were made ready in India, and at home the Reserves were called out. Three of the native Princes, Scindiah, Holkar, and the Nizam, offered their military resources to the Viceroy. Colonel

Appointment of the Commission.

March 16.

Reserves called out. March 26.

Alikhanoff, otherwise Ali Khan, the Russianised Turcoman who had been made Governor of Merv, treated British and Afghan officers alike with an insolence only to be explained by his barbarian origin. It was the opinion of Sir Edward Thornton, British Ambassador at Petersburg, that M. de Giers sincerely desired the maintenance of peace. But he was not, as Gortschakoff had been, Chancellor of the Empire. He was merely the Czar's clerk; and Alexander the Third, though by nature pacific, was under the influence of ambitious soldiers. While peace and war seemed to be trembling in the balance, a Russian force under General Komaroff attacked the Afghans, drove them out of Penjdeh, and occupied the place. War seemed inevitable, although M. de Giers hoped that "the regretable incident would not interrupt negotiations."

1885.

Russian attack on Afghans at Penjdeh.

March 30.

When the news reached England there was a panic on the Stock Exchange, and the same afternoon Mr. Gladstone used in the House of Commons language of unmistakable gravity. "This attack," he said, "bears the appearance of unprovoked aggression." When it occurred, the Amir was on British territory at Rawul Pindi, where Lord Dufferin received him with great magnificence, and handled him with great skill. Abdur Rahman, who came from Balkh, did not really care about the possession of Penjdeh at all. What he regarded as the essential points were Maruchak, higher up the Khushk river, and the Pass of Zulficar. But he felt keenly the desertion of his force by the British troops under Captain Yate, who fell back on the approach of the Russians. Captain Yate did his duty, and obeyed orders. The Amir thought that his allies ran away, and left his men to be slaughtered. It needed all Lord Dufferin's powers of persuasion, and a liberal gift

April 8.

Dufferin's conference with Abdur Rahman.

1885. of arms, to prevent him from abandoning the Power which had not protected him. Lord Dufferin, however, completely succeeded, and Abdur Rahman remained faithful to the British alliance. The dispute between England and Russia remained for further consideration. General Komaroff endeavoured to prove that the Afghans were the aggressors, but Sir Peter Lumsden considered that the Afghans had done everything they could to avoid a collision.

The Vote of Credit. While public feeling in England was thus inflamed and excited, the Government announced a Vote of Credit for eleven millions. Of this sum four millions and a half were required for past operations in the Soudan, which were not to be renewed. The rest of the total, six millions and a half, was to be divided for future contingencies between the Army and the Navy. When this proposal was made in the House of Commons, Mr.

April 27. Gladstone achieved the greatest Parliamentary victory of his life. His position was surrounded with difficulties. An apostle of economy and peace, he had to ask for a large pecuniary grant which implied at least the possibility of war. The

Gladstone's triumph. cause of difference with Russia involved strategic details which few Members of Parliament could be expected to understand, and what had actually occurred at Penjdeh he himself did not clearly know. The sum of eleven millions included a large amount of sheer waste, and he had to announce the utter failure of his own policy in the Soudan. He was confronted not only with an Opposition inspirited by moral victories in the lobby, but by Irishmen exasperated with Lord Spencer, and by the Fourth Party, who had seldom failed to make capital out of foreign affairs. Yet by sheer personal ascendency, and by appealing to the whole House of Commons as representing

the nation, he obtained his vote without a division, without a debate, without a single speech except his own.[1] When he sat down amid general cheering, no one rose, and when Sir Arthur Otway pronounced that the Ayes had it, no one challenged his decision. Such a proof of unanimity was not without effect upon the Russian Government. M. de Giers contended that the agreement signed on the 16th of March had not been broken, and that the unlucky encounter at Penjdeh came within the exception to the rule. But after the Vote of Credit he accepted a proposal that the question whether there had been a breach of faith should be submitted to the chief of a neutral State, subsequently specified as the King of Denmark, and with his acceptance the immediate danger of a terrible war passed away. When, however, Mr. Gladstone announced this solution of the problem in Parliament, the party spirit of the Conservatives revived, and they accused the Government of a base surrender. The later stages of the vote were stubbornly contested, and Lord Salisbury vied with Lord Randolph Churchill in denunciation of the Russian perfidy which had prevailed over Ministerial cowardice. Yet there were few Englishmen who really in their hearts desired to fight for Penjdeh, and the principle of arbitration, though not popular, was essentially fair. Lord Dufferin had agreed with the Amir, the person principally concerned, that if Penjdeh remained, as it did remain, Russian, he should have Maruchak and Zulficar. This really settled the debatable part of the frontier, and Sir Peter Lumsden was recalled, leaving an officer of lower rank, Colonel Ridgeway,[2] to arrange details on the spot. The

1885.

Russian acceptance of arbitration.

May 4. Attacks on the Government.

[1] Lord Randolph Churchill told me that it was Sir Stafford Northcote's failure to oppose this vote which determined the Fourth Party to get rid of him.

[2] Afterwards Sir West Ridgeway.

1885. policy of the Government was to evacuate the Soudan, to continue for a time the occupation of Egypt, and to lay out the frontier dividing Russian from Afghan territory in accordance with the wishes of the Amir.

The First Lord of the Admiralty had gone out as High Commissioner in the August of 1884 to settle Egyptian finance. A Conference summoned by Lord Granville for that purpose had already sat in London, and failed because foreign nations, especially France, would not allow the expenses of Egypt to be paid out of funds assigned to the bondholders. Lord Northbrook was equally unsuccessful. He discovered that more money had been assigned than was required to pay the interest, and he conceived that the reduction of debt by a Sinking Fund was less urgent than the rescue of the country from impending ruin. "It was absurd that Egypt should be devoting large amounts to the reduction of her Funded Debt when she was at the same time obliged to borrow on short loans at a much higher rate of interest, and, even with such borrowing, could not meet her current expenses."[1] But all the Powers except Italy protested against Lord Northbrook's plan, and his mission, like the Conference, resulted in a deadlock.

North-brook's mission.

The financial position of Egypt was not improved by the Conference of June 1884, nor by Lord Northbrook's official visit to Egypt later in the same year. Egyptian finance was established on a sound footing by the London Convention of March 1885, the most satisfactory achievement of Lord Granville at the Foreign Office. The parties to this instrument were the six Great Powers and Turkey. Its object was to rescue Egypt from pecuniary embarrassment, and to provide for her

The London Convention.

[1] Milner's *England in Egypt*, p. 117.

future solvency. The difficulty was how to do 1885.
these things without infringing the rights of foreign bondholders, who found an ardent patron in the French Republic. "The wonder is," says Lord Milner, "how in view of the indifference of most of the Powers to the welfare of Egypt, and the bitter annoyance of France at our presence in that country, the English Government ever succeeded in inducing all parties concerned to agree to so reasonable an arrangement." [1] This arrangement provided in the first place for a loan of nine millions sterling with a joint guarantee from all the Powers, and in the second place for a proper distribution of the revenues between the service of the debt and the expenses of administration. The short and simple result of it all was to substitute solvency for insolvency as the normal condition of Egypt. This concession from a partly callous and partly recalcitrant Europe was obtained by an adroit use of the lever which the claims of sufferers from the riots at Alexandria supplied. "We cannot," said Lord Granville in effect, "we cannot pay you from the revenues of a bankrupt country." But the payment of the Alexandrian indemnities was a small matter indeed when compared with the advantage of borrowing nine millions at three per cent. For Sir Evelyn Baring was thus enabled to spend a million upon the irrigation of the Delta, which has been repaid not threefold but an hundredfold, and has restored the prosperity of Egypt.[2]

[1] *England in Egypt*, p. 226.

[2] *Id.* 228–29.

CHAPTER IX

LORD SPENCER'S TASK

1882.

Anarchy in Ireland.

When Lord Spencer went to Ireland in May 1882, Irish society was on the brink of dissolution.[1] Mr. Forster's failure to put down crime had been so complete that murderous ruffians with knives in their pockets were actually patrolling the streets of Dublin. Whether they were in Ireland, or whether they were in England, Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan went in daily peril of their lives. The loyal classes were terrorised; for they were menaced not by an open combination like the Land League, but by some secret organism of which they knew nothing except that any one who exercised legal rights, or invoked legal aid, might be the victim, not of a suspected agitator,

Reign of terror.

but of an unsuspected assassin. High and low, rich and poor, landlord and tenant, felt that they were subject to an impalpable, intangible power, which might be most active when it was least visible, which flew, like the arrow, by night, and destroyed, like the pestilence, at noonday. Iron nerves, indomitable patience, and unflinching resolution carried the Viceroy through a gloomy and disastrous period more trying to fortitude, to temper, and to self-control than a battle or a siege.

[1] See Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 70–71. The same opinion was expressed to me twelve years afterwards by an Irishman of great ability and experience, not a politician, who knew everything that was going on at the time.

In the month of June, while the Crimes Bill was before the House of Commons, two murders of peculiar atrocity startled even the most callous. Mr. Walter Bourke, a Galway landlord, was shot dead with a corporal of the Dragoon Guards who had been sent to protect him, and Mr. Blake, Lord Clanricarde's agent, was killed with his servant, near Loughrea. Such offences are not peculiar to Ireland. The alarming features in the Irish case were that the crimes had been committed with impunity, and that the leaders of the people did not denounce them, while the people themselves were divided between sympathy and fear. If Mr. Parnell was ever serious in his undertaking to put down outrage, he must have considered that the introduction of the Crimes Bill relieved him from his promise. He would have nothing to do with the Government, which was boycotted by the representatives of Irish opinion. For the Exhibition of Irish Arts and Manufactures, opened in Dublin on the 15th of August, the Lord Mayor, a Nationalist Member of Parliament,[1] repudiated the patronage of the Castle, and the day after the opening ceremony Mr. Parnell, along with Mr. Dillon, was presented with the Freedom of the City. But while these festivities were held with all the signs of popular enthusiasm, the foundations of the social fabric were rocking. Without the Royal Irish Constabulary Ireland would have been mere chaos. Yet in this very month of August the Constabulary quarrelled with their Inspector General, and struck. The Dublin police, a separate force, also under the Government, immediately followed suit, and on the 1st of September Dublin was subject to military control, insomuch that Sackville Street, the principal thoroughfare, had to be cleared at the point of the bayonet. When the

1882.

Agrarian murders.

Parnell's inaction.

Strike of the Royal Irish;

and of the Dublin police.

[1] Mr. Dawson.

1882. Lord Lieutenant enrolled special constables, the Lord Mayor threatened to call out an opposing force, and it almost seemed as if Ireland would have to be reconquered. Even at this critical moment, when angry passions were raging, and terror was at its height, Lord Spencer's imperturbable serenity compelled respect. The disputes with the police were settled, the men returned to their duty, and from that moment the situation, though it long continued dangerous, began to amend.

The Maamtrasna murders. There was certainly room for improvement elsewhere than in Dublin. On an August morning in Connemara a farmer named Joyce, his wife, his mother, and his daughter, were found dead on the floor of their cabin. Joyce's two sons were wounded, and one of them died. They were able to say that the house had been attacked in the middle of the night by four men armed with bludgeons and revolvers. Fortunately the assassins had been seen by three farmers, who gave evidence against them, and they were hanged. The motive appears to have been a belief that the Joyces would inform against the murderers of Lord Ardilaun's bailiffs a year before, who were also brought to justice and execution. This barbarous crime, and its consequences, affected the future history of Ireland. Three men suffered for it on the scaffold, besides three men hanged for the murder of the bailiffs. Two of those convicted for killing the Joyces, themselves also called Joyce,[1] confessed their guilt. But at the same time they both exonerated Myles Joyce, the third, whom nevertheless Lord Spencer declined to reprieve. The Judge who tried them, Mr. Justice Barry, was one of the ablest on the Irish Bench, and he thought

Dec. 15.

[1] The district, west of Lough Corribb and Lough Mask, was known as the Joyce country.

the evidence against all the three prisoners equally strong. But even he was impressed by the dying declaration of the other two in favour of Myles, and the Viceroy would probably have accepted it if he had not known the real meaning of it to be that Myles, though present for a guilty purpose, had not himself struck a blow. Lord Spencer gave by his inflexibility a handle to other politicians besides the Parnellites, and it was long before he heard the last of the Maamtrasna murders. His open enemies gave him comparatively little trouble. 1882.

The Irish National League.

The Irish National League, founded on the 17th of October, was simply the old Land League under a new name. Mr. Parnell had discouraged the Ladies' Land League, which was not subject to his control, and stopped it by withholding funds. The new organisation was entirely at his disposal, and its chief, if not its sole, object was Home Rule. The immediate question, however, was not whether Ireland should have Home Rule, but whether she should have any rule at all. Dublin was not safe. Mr. Justice Lawson, who had committed Mr. Gray, proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, to prison for contempt of court, was only saved by the vigilance of his escort from assassination in Merrion Square. A fortnight later a detective was killed in Abbey Street, and a man named Field, one of a jury who had convicted the murderer of a policeman, was stabbed outside his own house in North Frederick Street, and left for dead. It is strange that in the face of outrages like these the Irish Executive should have wasted time and energy in prosecutions for speeches. But at the beginning of 1883 Mr. Healy and Mr. Davitt were sent to prison for six months in default of finding securities for their good behaviour, with the result that a quarrel between Davitt and Parnell about the nationalisation of the land was immediately healed. The indictment of

Crime in Dublin.

Nov. 11.

1883.

1882.

Strength of national sentiment.

Mr. William O'Brien, Editor of *United Ireland*, for seditious libel, led to a disagreement of the jury, and to Mr. O'Brien's election for Mallow against the Irish Solicitor-General, Mr. Naish. Whenever Lord Spencer attempted to fight against the public opinion, or the national sentiment, of Ireland, he always failed. His success was in dealing with the real crime which Mr. Forster never touched.

So far as the purely political action of the Parnellites was concerned, Mr. Gladstone's new rules of procedure, to which the autumn sitting was almost entirely devoted, were more useful than any legislation, or any executive vigour. The debates to which they gave rise were infinitely wearisome, and can be profitable to no mortal now. But the rules themselves, which had all been adopted, with some substantial amendments, when Parliament was prorogued at the beginning of December, were the heaviest blow ever dealt at obstruction, and recovered for the House real freedom of debate. If the Parnellites were entitled to boast that they had forced the House of Commons to do what it would not have done without them, they had learnt on the other hand that it was vain to rely upon the divisions of English parties, for which, as for their own tactics, the general sense of the House was too strong.

Adoption of the Closure.

Although the form in which the Closure was adopted, by requiring the Speaker or Chairman to take the initiative, made its application difficult, and certain to be rare, it remained in the background as a decisive weapon against resistance to the will of the House otherwise than by argument. The rules directed at irrelevance and repetition were a still less qualified advantage, as was the power given to the Speaker or Chairman of declining a dilatory motion which he considered

an abuse. So far, and in other details, the House followed the lines laid down by Mr. Speaker Brand when made Dictator in times of emergency. A more doubtful regulation, added in course of debate, substituted for the unlimited right to introduce a fresh subject by moving the adjournment of the House a Standing Order, carefully framed, which restricted this privilege to the commencement of public business, and required for its exercise the assent of forty Members rising in their places. For while, in theory, these conditions abridged the licence which had hitherto prevailed, in practice they authorised an encroachment upon Parliamentary time which the whole House discouraged so long as it could be made by the caprice of a single individual. The most useful and practical of all the rules was devised by Mr. Gladstone himself, whose favourite principle and word was at that time "devolution." To avoid the necessity of discussing all Bills in Committee of the whole House he proposed the appointment for each session of two Standing Committees on Law and on Trade respectively, consisting of sixty or eighty Members apiece. Long experience has shown that, while these Committees are unfit to deal with measures which excite passion and divide parties, they afford excellent machinery for those numerous projects of social reform which raise no controversial issues. If the new rules did not kill obstruction, they at least scotched it, and Mr. Gladstone was not less strenuous than Lord Spencer in his contest with the spirit of anarchy.[1]

1882.

Adjournment of the House.

Standing Committees.

But flat, indeed, is Parliamentary Procedure

[1] Two days after the Prorogation of Parliament the Queen opened the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, designed by George Edmund Street, who did not live to see the completion of his work. In this fine building the whole of the Supreme Court of Judicature was brought under one roof, thus symbolising the effect of legal reform. The old

Dec. 4.

1883. compared with the discovery and detection of crime. Since the tragedy of the Phœnix Park, Lord Spencer had not been idle, and so soon as the Crimes Act had passed, a rigid inquiry was set on foot. The result, when it came, was sudden and startling. In the middle of January 1883, seventeen men were arrested in Dublin on a charge of conspiracy to murder, and bail was in all cases refused. Most of the prisoners belonged to the mechanic or labouring class. One of them, however, James Carey by name, was a Town Councillor, and represented the Ward which contains Trinity College. The apprehension of Carey was a remarkable event, and people began to suspect that for once the Irish Executive, instead of striking blindly, had got hold of a clue. At first there was some disappointment. In the Police Court there was the usual informer, a working man, who had once, so he said, been a Fenian. He described a number of plans to take Mr. Forster's life, and a week later the conspiracy against Mr. Field was explained. Another week passed, and the great topic of all was brought forward. Knives had been found in Carey's house, surgeon's knives, such as had made the wounds that killed Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. This was on the 3rd of February, and then at last the whole of the United Kingdom watched with strained interest for the revelations of that Dublin Court House. Three men were identified as having been in the Phœnix Park on the 6th of May, and on the 10th of February the weekly instalment comprised the evidence of a car driver, who had driven four of the men in

Discovery of the Phœnix Park murderers.

Jan. 20.

Courts of Common Law at Westminster, neither dignified nor venerable, were pulled down, and the great Hall of William Rufus was restored to its proper dimensions. It was, however, found convenient that Chancery Judges should still sit without juries, and should take the same class of business as before.

the dock to the Park. This witness, Michael Kavanagh, swore that Carey gave the signal by raising a white handkerchief, that the murder was then committed, and that he drove the four murderers away by the Chapelizod Gate. While this narrative was being given, the prisoners in the dock, including those implicated by name, diverted themselves by laughing and talking. They did not seem to realise that they were in any danger at all. The magistrate proceeded quietly, adjourning the case from week to week. When the Court opened on the 17th of February, the loudest and most ostentatious of the defendants was missing. Where was Carey? The others looked round with anxiety, and began to whisper among themselves. They had not long to wait. Carey entered slowly, and took his place on the witness-stand. Decisive moments in life are rare, but this was one of them. When the other murderers saw Carey on that 17th of February, they knew that they were dead men. The only difficulty the Crown had after that was to get a Judge who would be willing to try the case, and a jury who would not be afraid to convict the prisoners. Both difficulties were overcome, and the junior Judge on the Bench, Mr. Justice O'Brien, presided. Carey's evidence required corroboration, but it was amply corroborated. It was necessary, for he was the only witness who knew everything. The Murder Club which culminated in the Phœnix Park was called the Invincibles. They were under the orders of "Number One," a man called Tynan, whom Carey swore that he had never seen. He was probably lying. But at all events Carey had arranged the crime in the Phœnix Park, of which the original objects had been Lord Cowper, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Burke. Mr. Forster and Lord Cowper having left Ireland, by some curious accident, unharmed, the vengeance or 1883.

1883. hatred of the Invincibles was directed against Burke alone. Lord Frederick owed his death to having gallantly attempted to save his companion's life with no other weapon than his umbrella. As the result of Carey's testimony, supported by Kavanagh and others, five men were hanged, and three were sent into penal servitude for life. No evidence given at these trials implicated the Land League in any way. The Invincibles, as a diary kept by one of them proved, detested Parnell and peaceful agitation. Their line was murder, and they followed it. Their great opportunity came when Mr. Forster with strange fatuity suppressed the League, and left the people of Ireland at the mercy of secret organisms. While the Invincibles were watching him day and night to take his life, he was totally unaware of their existence, and was busily engaged in locking up men who knew as little of them as himself. If there was a deeper and blacker miscreant than any other involved in all this wickedness, it was Carey. The Government, having most properly used him for the purposes of justice, despatched him to the Cape. But the Invincibles did not let him out of their sight. He was followed by a comrade called O'Donnell, who shot him dead before he could land. O'Donnell was brought home, tried, and executed at Newgate before the end of the year.

Destruction of the Invincibles.

So perished the Invincibles, and with them the reign of terror in Ireland. Lord Spencer had still many difficulties to contend with, many obstacles to surmount. But the most important part of his work was over. He had done what Mr. Forster failed to do. He had put down political assassination in Ireland, and that without resorting to the odious power given him by the Crimes Act of trying men for murder without a jury. The functions entrusted to him by Parliament were

not, like Mr. Forster's, arbitrary. They were legal and constitutional. But they were used with such vigour and determination, that they completely re-established order, and substituted regular authority for brute force.[1] 1883.

Mr. Forster was more successful in Parliament than he had been in Ireland. During the long debates on the Address which preluded the session of 1883 he found an opportunity to make upon his old opponent, Mr. Parnell, a direct personal attack. He chose his ground well, and developed his case with masterly skill in the most powerful speech of his life. Although the air was then thick with the revelations of Carey and with rumours of what he might yet reveal, Forster expressly said that he did not accuse Parnell of complicity with murder. He accused him of presiding over an organisation which encouraged and connived at outrage without using his influence to put outrage down. By means of copious and well-arranged extracts from speeches and journals, he showed that the Leaders of the Land League, including Parnell himself, so far from denouncing moonlighters, and other agrarian criminals, had referred to such offences in language of revolting callousness, and had taken advantage, in their campaign against the landlords, of the terror which they inspired. "This is," said Forster, "the first time in the history of either England or Ireland in which an agitation has been conducted by appeals to personal injury to individuals, and not by appeals to the voter, or to public opinion." Mr. Forster's indictment was tremendous, and the result of it was never effaced. It is the foundation

Feb. 22. Forster's attack on Parnell.

[1] In March 1883, Lord Spencer, being wholly absorbed in Irish business, gave up the Presidency of the Council to Lord Carlingford, who held it with the Privy Seal. Lord Spencer, however, remained a Member of the Cabinet, though he was seldom able to attend it.

1883. of all subsequent attempts to connect the Land League with crime; and whereas many of them contained much that was demonstrably false, it was absolutely true. The Land Leaguers had no more to do with the Invincibles than Mr. Forster himself. They were as much shocked as he was at the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish. They would never have had art or part in the murder of Mr. Burke. But they had stood passively by while landlords were shot, and while tenants who would not obey the unwritten law of the League were dragged from their beds to be slain in the presence of their families. That, and that alone, is the connection between Parnellism and crime. It was beyond the cognisance of any court save public opinion, which in Ireland did not condemn it, and that tribunal which has been implanted in the human conscience by Him who sees the heart. Mr. Forster's speech was unanswerable. When he sat down, there were loud calls for "Parnell," but no response. Parnell's colleagues pressed him to reply. He remained obstinately in his seat. Their utmost importunity could only induce him to move the adjournment of the debate when the House rose some hours afterwards, so that he had the right to begin next day. When the ostensible answer came, it was no real answer at all. Parnell frigidly denied the jurisdiction of the House. He was responsible to Ireland, not to England. He had beaten Mr. Forster there, and he would beat Lord Spencer. One nation could not govern another. It seems that an Irish Member, when asked what he thought of this performance, exclaimed, "Splendid! He just treated them in the right way: declined to notice Forster's accusations, said he cared only for Irish opinion, and that Ireland would stand by him; that is the way to treat the House of

Parnell's tardy reply.

Commons."[1] Splendid it might be. Business, to ignore all higher considerations, it was not. Parnell's political object was to obtain Home Rule for Ireland, and Home Rule for Ireland could only come through the House of Commons, which represented the public opinion of the United Kingdom. Parnell knew that well enough. He did not reply, because he had no reply to make. He let judgment go by default, because the charges were incapable of disproof. If he had beaten Forster in Ireland, Forster had beaten him at Westminster. He was beaten because he had forgotten that what is morally wrong can never be politically right. 1883.

In his view of Nationalist opinion Parnell was quite correct. Forster's onslaught did him more good than harm in Ireland, and his nominee, Mr. Healy, who had been imprisoned under the Crimes Act, won a seat in Ulster[2] within a month after he came out of gaol. This Nationalist victory so inflamed the Orangemen that they used language for which many Home Rulers had been imprisoned, and attended meetings with revolvers. They were not, however, prosecuted, though one of them, Lord Rossmore, who happened to be a magistrate, was removed from the Commission of the Peace. This step showed Lord Spencer's impartiality, and his determination to preserve order. An effort made by Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville to invoke the aid of the spiritual arm was less fortunate. An Irish Catholic Member, a Home Ruler of the academic type, went to Rome for the winter at the close of 1882. He suggested that he might use his influence at the Vatican in favour of the Irish Government, and procured a letter of recommendation from

July 2.

Orange violence in Ulster.

Mr. Errington at Rome.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 11.
[2] For Monaghan.

1888. Lord Granville. Neither British law nor British sentiment permitted diplomatic intercourse with the Pope, who had, moreover, long ceased to be a temporal Sovereign. Mr. Errington received no reward for his services until he was made a baronet, he had no official position, and he could at any time be disavowed. The only apparent result of his interference was a Papal letter, or rescript, condemning the pecuniary tribute offered to Mr. Parnell by his admirers. Charles Greville describes O'Connell's "rent," a similar offering, as nobly paid and nobly earned. Mr. Parnell was not a rich man, and his absorption in politics, to say nothing of his imprisonment, had prevented him from managing his estate. A mortgagee foreclosed, and Parnell found himself liable for the sum of thirteen thousand pounds. Considering that he had been the presiding genius of the Land League, and that without the Land League there would have been no Land Act, it was not unnatural that the Irish people should pay the money. At all events the question did not seem to concern the Church of Rome. Leo the Thirteenth, however, or his advisers, thought they saw an opportunity of discrediting a Protestant who presumed to lead public opinion in the Isle of Saints. They did him no harm and themselves no good. When Cardinal Simeoni fulminated his anathema early in May, the tribute fund stood at a figure between seven and eight thousand pounds. By the middle of June it had reached fifteen thousand, and it was thirty-seven thousand before the end of the year. The Sacred Congregation, of which Simeoni was Prefect, had succeeded in proving that the most Catholic country in Europe, Spain alone excepted, would not suffer the Pope to meddle in political affairs. It was characteristic of Parnell that at the banquet which succeeded

Testimonial to Parnell.

May 11.

the presentation he made no reference to the large and generous sum he had received.[1] 1883.

The operations of Murder Clubs were not confined to Ireland. A miscreant, called Patrick Ford, who at that time edited the *Irish World* in New York, preached the gospel of dynamite, and urged that English cities should be laid in ashes. He never risked his own personal safety, and in himself would have been, such was his caution, harmless enough. But his principles were adopted by men more dangerous than himself, and London was startled by an explosion at the Office of the Local Government Board, while a manufactory of nitro-glycerine was discovered at Birmingham. It was determined to legislate promptly, and Sir William Harcourt introduced a Bill for the adequate punishment of such offences. It was certainly stringent. To cause a dangerous explosion was made a felony punishable with penal servitude for life. For a conspiracy, or attempt to commit such an act, the punishment might be twenty years, and even possession of an explosive substance in suspicious circumstances rendered the possessor liable to fourteen years, unless he could rebut the presumption of guilt, his own evidence being admissible. A sworn inquiry might be held into an offence under the statute, as in Ireland under the Crimes Act, even if no culprit had been discovered. Sir William Harcourt, who knew how to make the most of such an occasion, got his Bill through the House of Commons at a single sitting, and though Sir Richard Cross argued that it should be a temporary measure, his own party would not hear him. When people are apprehensive of being

The Dynamiters.

March 15.

April 9.

The Explosive Substances Bill.

[1] For an almost incredible account of the manner in which Parnell took the cheque from the Lord Mayor of Dublin, see O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, p. 28.

1883. blown sky high, their zeal for playing the political game is apt to cool. The Bill was sent to the Lords the same evening, and there a singular scene occurred. Lord Kimberley hinted, in rather mysterious language, that the public safety would not admit delay. But Lord Salisbury was quite unaffected by his appeal, and attacked the Government with as much bitterness as if they had proposed to suspend the Constitution. He even quoted the German chemist, Liebig, to the effect that a nation's prosperity might be gauged by the amount of sulphuric acid it employed. This singular outburst, of all Lord Salisbury's indiscretions the most indiscreet, did not impede the passing of the Bill, which became law the next day. No Irish Member had said a word against it. Mr. Parnell's biographer, with simplicity and candour, describes the plots of the dynamiters as "occasionally hatched with utter indifference to the lives of the Nationalist Members themselves."[1] The murder of tenants who paid rack-rents in Ireland was simply a deplorable incident in the campaign; but that a Nationalist Leader should be dismembered by dynamite would cause great inconvenience, and show a lamentable lack of appreciation. When four men were convicted at the Old Bailey of treason felony by levying war against society with dynamite, and sentenced by the Lord Chief Justice to penal servitude for the term of their natural lives, Parnell may perhaps have felt that they were well out of the way. Similar sentences were passed at Glasgow by the Lord Justice Clerk, and the profession of a dynamiter was shown to be attended by artificial as well as natural risks.

Lord Salisbury's opposition.

June 14.

Dec. 21.

When Parliament met in 1883, Ministers had determined that they must make a serious effort to

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 31.

deal with Mr. Bradlaugh's case by legislation, and at the earliest opportunity they introduced a Bill which gave Members the choice of either swearing or affirming their allegiance to the Crown. Before this measure came on for second reading, Mr. Bradlaugh, who had hitherto been singularly unfortunate in litigation, won two notable victories in the courts of law. In the suit brought against him by a common informer it had been taken for granted by Mr. Justice Mathew, and decided, with some doubt, by the Court of Appeal, that any one of the public had a right to bring the action. On this point, and this point alone, Mr. Bradlaugh took the case up to the House of Lords, which decided, by a majority of three to one, that penalties for sitting and voting in either House could only be recovered by the Attorney-General. The whole proceedings, except so far as they had vacated Mr. Bradlaugh's seat, were thus set aside, and Mr. Bradlaugh was relieved of a debt estimated at forty-five thousand pounds, and certainly enough to ruin him several times over.[1] The argument was extremely technical, and Mr. Bradlaugh, who appeared in person, was justly proud of his success against one of the most brilliant advocates at the bar.[2] But the case did not stop there. The real plaintiff in the action was different from the nominal one. Mr. Newdegate, Member for North Warwickshire, had signed a bond by which he covenanted to indemnify Clarke, a man of straw, against any expenses which he might incur. By this ingenious, and truly Christian, device Mr. Bradlaugh, notwithstanding the enormous liabilities which failure would bring upon him, was deprived of his right

1883.

April 23. The Affirmation Bill.

April 9. Bradlaugh's victory in the Lords.

Bradlaugh *v.* Newdegate.

[1] Lord Watson and Lord Fitzgerald, formerly Mr. Justice Fitzgerald of the Irish Bench, concurred with the Lord Chancellor in this judgment. Lord Blackburn dissented. L. R. Appeal Cases, VIII. 354–385.

[2] Sir Hardinge Giffard.

1888. to costs if he succeeded. Had the law allowed such tricks, it would have justified the opinion of Mr. Bumble in the case of Oliver Twist. But it did not. On the contrary "maintenance," or officious intermeddling in other men's suits, had always been recognised as an actionable wrong, and Mr. Newdegate gained nothing by sheltering himself behind Mr. Clarke. On the very day that the second reading of the Affirmation Bill was moved, the Lord Chief Justice, in an elaborate and most interesting judgment,[1] held that Mr. Newdegate was liable to Mr. Bradlaugh for the whole expenses of the action from the issue of the writ to the decision of the Lords. Lord Coleridge's caustic comments upon the manner in which Bradlaugh had been treated by men acting in what they thought defence of what they thought religion were worthy of his great office, and produced a salutary impression upon reflective minds.

In the House of Commons, however, honest prejudice against Bradlaugh and the bigotry which usurps the name of religion made a calm consideration of the subject difficult, if not impossible. Yet the matter was surely plain, and the question free from doubt. Even if theological tests for Members of Parliament were desirable, they did not in fact exist. It was not as an Atheist, but as an "avowed" Atheist, that the opponents of the Bill claimed to exclude Mr. Bradlaugh. In the early weeks of that very Session a disciple of Mill had, like Mill himself, taken the oath without objection from any one, or scruple of his own. Even Mr. Bradlaugh, who had formerly, though not recently, proclaimed his Atheism in a manner offensive to most people's feelings, might have kissed the sacred book, and called upon God to

[1] L. R. xi. Q. B. D. 1–15.

help him, without let or hindrance, if he had said nothing else. No one who has seen Members take the oath in batches at the beginning of a new Parliament can believe that by such a scrambling ceremony reverence is either inculcated or observed. Either Atheists were men of honour and probity or they were not. If they were, there was no reason why they should not sit in the House of Commons. If they were not, no oath would keep them out. But indeed it is not from them that social or political dangers arise. "Atheisme," said the greatest philosopher who ever sat in the House of Commons, "did never perturbe States; for," as he adds, with his unrivalled terseness and point, "it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further." [1] But such wisdom as this was not to the taste, even if it were within the comprehension, of those who attacked the "Bradlaugh Relief Bill." Still less would they have cared to remember the same illustrious writer's remark that "the great *Atheists*, indeed, are *Hypocrites*; which are ever handling Holy Things, but without Feeling. So as they must needs be cauterised in the End." [2] Yet this fine and pregnant saying might stand as a motto for the magnificent speech of Mr. Gladstone on the second night of the debate. It was the most characteristic, if not the most eloquent, that he ever delivered. Ordinary Liberals were content to support the Bill on plain grounds of right and justice. Mr. Bradlaugh was a British subject, who had been three times chosen by the electors of Northampton to represent them, and they were the best judges of his fitness. Mr. Gladstone took a different and a higher line. To him the whole subject was intensely repugnant. He detested Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions. He detested, if possi-

1883.

April 26. Gladstone's speech.

[1] Bacon's *Essays*, p. 68. Macmillan, 1862.
[2] *Id.* p. 66.

1883. ble, still more the familiarity with which sacred names and solemn symbols were handled in debate. He had been profoundly shocked and scandalised by the ejaculation of a good party man, who exclaimed, without the slightest consciousness or desire of offending any one, that he "supposed they all believed in a God of some sort." This, then, he said, was the final defence to which the champions of religious intolerance had been driven. Upon the "narrow ledge of Theism" they were to take their stand. Agnostics, who held that God might indeed exist, because His existence could not be disproved, but that we could know nothing of Him, and that He had no concern with us, were as welcome as they were numerous. Dogmatic Atheists, who were rare, and made no converts, were warned off, unless, indeed, they were willing to use words which committed them to nothing, and conveyed to them no meaning. "I am convinced," said the Prime Minister, "that on every religious ground, as well as every political ground, the true and the wise course is not to deal out religious liberty by halves, quarters, and fractions, but to deal it out entire, and make no distinctions between man and man on the ground of religious difference from one end of the land to the other." He concluded with a solemn warning not to let religion, "the expression of the divine mind," be associated in public opinion with an act of injustice. If a division could have been taken when Mr. Gladstone sat down, the second reading of the Bill would probably have been carried. But the debate dragged on. Lord Randolph Churchill, who may be said to have led the Opposition for the nonce, expressed the strange doctrine that Bradlaugh, who was at least Member for Northampton, represented nobody but himself, and described

with much simplicity the difference between the two sides. He himself spoke for the respectable and religious people of the country. The supporters of the Bill, such as Mr. Gladstone, Lord Selborne, and Mr. Bright, were "the residuum and scum of the population, who scoffed at all restraint, moral or religious." When at length the House divided, the respectable and religious people of the country had a majority of three. Among them were most of the Parnellites, who belonged to a Church that has never favoured toleration, with eight English Liberals, including three Fitzwilliams, and the only English Catholic in the House. The defeat of the Government, though it excited some momentary enthusiasm, was not sufficiently important to justify resignation. Mr. Bradlaugh was again, at the instance of Sir Stafford Northcote, excluded from the House, and took to the platform, where he pleaded his cause with great ability and vigour. The epilogue to this discreditable drama may best be spoken by the Lord Chief Justice of England. Lord Coleridge had occasion this spring to try several persons on a charge of blasphemy in a journal called the *Free-thinker*. This foolish and mischievous prosecution was aimed at Mr. Bradlaugh, though it failed to reach him, as he was not shown to be connected with the *Free-thinker*, and the trial ended in a disagreement of the jury. In summing up the case, Lord Coleridge finally disposed of the rather profane superstition that "Christianity is part of the common law," and used these memorable words: "Persecution is a very easy form of virtue. A difficult form of virtue is to try in your own life to obey what you believe to be God's will. It is not easy to do, and if you do it you make but little noise in the world. But it is easy to turn on some one who differs from you in

1883.

May 3. Defeat of the Bill.

April 14.

1883. opinion, and in the guise of zeal for God's honour to attack a man whose life perhaps may be much more pleasing to God than your own." [1]

April 5. The legislation of 1883 was solid, useful, and important. Mr. Childers's first Budget, showing a surplus of two millions and a half, enabled him to take off the extra income tax imposed by Mr. Gladstone for the brief Egyptian campaign, and bring it down from sixpence halfpenny to fivepence,

Sixpenny telegrams. besides introducing sixpenny telegrams in obedience to the vote of the House. Mr. Fawcett had been trying to introduce them ever since he came to the Post Office, and now at last the Treasury was com-

Chamberlain's Bankruptcy Act. pelled by Parliament to yield.[2] Mr. Chamberlain's Bankruptcy Act, the best yet passed, was a double success. An excellent measure in itself, it was the first achievement of the Standing Committee on Trade, where Mr. Goschen presided. The gist of the Bill was a transference of the control over insolvent estates from the Court of Bankruptcy to the Board of Trade, acting through Official Receivers. Both efficiency and economy were promoted by this salutary change, which increased Mr. Chamberlain's reputation for practical capacity

Agricultural Holdings Act. and knowledge of business. The Agricultural Holdings Act gave the tenant compensation for his unexhausted improvements at the end of his tenancy, and was very popular with the farmers, especially as it limited the amount recoverable by a distress to one year's rent. Lord Salisbury carried in the House of Lords an amendment to except current leases which were inconsistent with compensation, and, though dissuaded by the Duke of Richmond, went so far as to provoke a conflict between the two Houses on the point. But as he

[1] *Life of Lord Coleridge*, ii. 293.

[2] The charge to the public, however, was not actually lowered till 1885.

only had a majority of one, and Mr. Gladstone was not in any case inclined to give way, the Bill passed as it left the Commons. 1883.

The chief measure of the year was the Corrupt Practices Act, which did something to codify the law of elections and to curtail expense. It was a thoroughly sound and well-drawn Bill, drafted and conducted with remarkable dexterity by the Attorney-General, Sir Henry James. At the General Election of 1880 bribery had been unpleasantly frequent on both sides, and several boroughs had been disfranchised. But prevention is better than cure, and the main principle upon which Sir Henry James relied was a fixed limit of expenditure, proportionate to the number of votes in the constituency. Proved excess would vacate the seat. There were other stringent provisions against indirect bribery, but this was the essence of the scheme. In two respects it might, and in one it certainly should, have gone further. The Attorney-General's chief mistake was allowing conveyance of voters to the poll in private carriages, as distinguished from cabs and flies, thus giving the richer candidate or party a clear advantage. It would no doubt have been more difficult to provide for the payment of necessary expenses from public funds, and Mr. Gladstone conciliated the Opposition by resisting an amendment to that effect. But poor men are kept out of Parliament by inability to satisfy the claims of the Returning Officer, and it is significant that the amendment should have been moved by one of the only three workmen who then sat in the House of Commons.[1] The most stormy debate in Committee, however, turned upon the definition of "undue influence" by spiritual persons, that is to say by Irish priests. It was notorious that in Ireland the priests preached Corrupt Practices Act.

[1] Henry Broadhurst, Member for Stoke.

1888. politics, as clergymen sometimes do in England, and it had hitherto been quite impossible to prevent them. Mr. Parnell, who disliked them, but could not afford to throw them over, would have restricted intimidation in the Act to a refusal, or threatened refusal, of the Sacraments. This is strictly logical, inasmuch as it deals with those menaces alone which the priest has power to enforce. But sacerdotalism, Catholic or Anglican, is always a red rag to the House of Commons, and a more ambitious form of words was adopted, which evaded the difficulty by leaving it to the Judges. That part of the Statute has not been efficacious. But the Act as a whole was a vast improvement on the old law, and by passing it, with the Bankruptcy Act, the Government could boast of having restored its legislative power to the House of Commons.

The Channel Tunnel.

On one point Ministers were rather too anxious to evade their own responsibility by throwing it upon Parliament. So far back as the year 1872 Lord Granville had pronounced in favour of connecting England with France by a submarine tunnel, and two years later Lord Derby, who had succeeded him as Foreign Secretary, expressed a similar opinion. In 1875 an eminent engineer, Sir John Hawkshaw, designed a tunnel, and the French Minister of Public Works introduced a Bill into the Chamber. Financial troubles ensued, and no more was heard of the project till 1881, when it was adopted by an enterprising contractor, Sir Edward Watkin, Member for Hythe. He pushed his works under the bed of the sea at a point between Folkestone and Dover, until the Board of Trade, representing the foreshore rights of the

July 6, 1882. Crown, restrained him by injunction in Chancery. Next session a private Bill was introduced, which would of course, if passed, have over-ridden the Board of Trade and the Courts of Law. But by

this time Lord Wolseley had drawn attention to a very serious aspect of the case which successive Governments had overlooked. In the event of war between England and France, would it be possible to defend the tunnel? This was a question for the Cabinet, who are and must be the one responsible Council of National Defence. The Prime Minister was in favour of the tunnel. Lord Granville and Lord Derby were committed to it. Mr. Chamberlain, on the other hand, had quarrelled with Sir Edward Watkin, and was regarded as unfavourable; while Mr. Bright, who considered the objections as worthy of Bedlam, had left the Cabinet. Some eminent Frenchmen, such as Michel Chevalier and Léon Say, were enthusiastic supporters. But then no one had ever suggested that England would invade France. Mr. Gladstone always declined to believe that anybody, except Lord Beaconsfield, would do wrong, until he had actually done it, and on this occasion he held the Government to be bound by previous assent. Parliament, however, was free, and a Joint Committee of both Houses was appointed in the month of April to report upon the question. The Committee was not a very strong one, and it was divided, six to four. Lord Lansdowne, the Chairman, recommended that the tunnel should be made. But he was out-voted, and in deference to the majority the Bill was withdrawn. Public opinion, without distinction of party, was affected by the military evidence which the Committee took. The Duke of Cambridge agreed, for once, with Lord Wolseley, and even men with as strong a love of peace as John Bright himself dreaded an infinite possibility of panic, which might lead to bloated armaments or even to conscription. The commercial results of the tunnel might be highly advantageous, though the French Government had 1883.

1888. just declined to renew the Commercial Treaty. But, improbable as invasion through a tunnel might be, there are risks, even remote risks, too tremendous to be run.

Chamberlain's speeches.

Although Mr. Chamberlain was successful in his own department, he gave his chief at this time a good deal of anxiety. The duty of a Cabinet Minister is not precisely defined in any book, and in some respects it hardly admits of accurate definition. He is of course bound to defend, in or out of Parliament, the policy and the measures of his colleagues as if they were his own. How far is he at liberty to express in public opinions which they do not share? Some amount of individual freedom has always been claimed and acknowledged, as with Catholic Emancipation in the Cabinet of Lord Liverpool, and Italian independence or American union in the Cabinet of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Gladstone himself had exercised a good deal of private judgment in discussing, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the public expenditure of his colleagues. Now it was Mr. Chamberlain's turn, and the Prime Minister did not like it. In the middle of June an interesting celebration was held at Birmingham with the object of doing honour to John Bright, who had been forty years in Parliament, and twenty-five years Member for the borough. Mr. Chamberlain, who attended as his colleague in the company of Lord Granville, took or made an opportunity of declaring for the disestablishment of the Church, manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, and payment of Members. He also used language which was construed at Windsor to imply satisfaction at the absence of Royalty, and referred to the "so-called rights of property." That Lord Salisbury should denounce this language as Jacobinical, and as "a new, a sinister, a most terrible feature

in our constitutional history," was not surprising. 1888.
He was a Tory, Mr. Chamberlain a Radical. There was a great gulf fixed between them. But a higher personage than Lord Salisbury protested, and Mr. Gladstone was drawn into a rather difficult correspondence with the Queen's tactful Secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby.[1] The Prime Minister was apologetic and disapproving. He suggested that Mr. Chamberlain should explain himself at the Cobden Club when he presided at the annual dinner. Mr. Chamberlain did explain himself with a vengeance. Whigs had been leaving the Club of late, and M. Clémenceau, the French Radical Deputy, had joined it. The ideas of the Cobden Club, said Mr. Chamberlain, were Cobden's ideas, June 30.
and Cobden was a Radical. Radicals would not be bribed to silence by places. They could not offer their allegiance to a party which imposed such intolerable conditions. The Prime Minister was seriously annoyed, and complained to Lord Granville that Mr. Chamberlain made claims inconsistent with the corporate loyalty of Cabinets. It may have been so, as it may have been with Mr. Gladstone himself when he supported Parliamentary Reform in 1864 and Irish disestablishment in 1865. But in England a public man never suffers for speaking out. Mr. Chamberlain's staunchest opponents respected his honesty and courage. What the English people cannot stand is shuffling and double dealing.

The Governor-General of India was not less Liberal and not less straightforward than Mr. Chamberlain. Lord Ripon went to India imbued with the principles of Macaulay, and determined to promote in every practical way the rights of the native population. He not only encouraged local government through representative bodies in

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 112–13.

1883. The Ilbert Bill.

all the Provinces. He resolved also to abolish the restrictions upon native magistrates, and to give them the right of trying Europeans. Macaulay did much the same thing on the Council of Lord William Bentinck when he took from British subjects in the Mofussil the right of appealing to the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He substituted the Sudder Court, which was the Company's and not the King's, but administered justice to the people. "If it is not fit for that purpose," wrote Macaulay, "it ought to be made so. If it is, . . . why should we except a mere handful of settlers from its jurisdiction?"[1] For this proposal the English Press in India assailed Macaulay with indescribable scurrility. Lord Ripon gave District Magistrates jurisdiction over Europeans in the Provinces, as they already had in the Presidency towns. The measure which conferred it upon them was called the Ilbert Bill, from the name of the Legal Member who had charge of it in Council. But, as a matter of fact, it was drawn up before Mr. Ilbert[2] arrived in India, and the Bill was really Lord Ripon's own. Though approved by the Government at home, and unimpeachably just, it excited such furious opposition from the planting interest that the privilege of claiming a mixed jury, half native, half European, was given to Europeans charged before a District Magistrate or Sessions Judge. Rash experiments are peculiarly dangerous in India, but Lord Ripon's expert advisers knew very well what they were about. Although educated Hindus, and even Mohammedans, are not always fit for high executive office, their judicial qualities are conspicuous, and Privy Councillors accustomed to try Indian Appeals think the most highly of native Judges. Lord Ripon's policy was exaggerated on

[1] Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, i. 403.
[2] Afterwards Sir Courtenay Ilbert.

both sides, and affected very few persons. The temporary mischief caused by the excitement of mutual jealousy and suspicion between natives and settlers was far more than counterbalanced by the removal of a grievance which could not be reconciled with the equality promised in the Queen's famous Proclamation.[1] 1883.

[1] See vol. ii. p. 185.

CHAPTER X

THE FRANCHISE

1884. THE principal business of Parliament in 1884 was a Reform Bill for the counties. But a continuous narrative of that transaction is better preceded than broken up by an account of such other matters as divided with it the interest of public men. Mr. Bradlaugh, having failed in his action against the Serjeant-at-Arms, took a hint from the judgment of Mr. Justice Stephen, and startled the
Feb. 14. House once more by marching of his own accord to the table between two supporters,[1] and administering the oath to himself. Sir Stafford Northcote having moved to exclude him, he voted in the three divisions which followed, so that the Attorney-General might test the validity of his procedure by suing him for penalties. His next step was to take the Chiltern Hundreds, and present himself
Bradlaugh's fourth election. for re-election at Northampton.[2] He was returned for the fourth time by a larger majority than ever, and the Government were again defeated in an attempt to let him take the oath provisionally. Sir Henry James brought his action in due course, with a result which afforded a complete legal defence for

[1] Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Burt.

[2] A Member of Parliament cannot in law resign his seat. In fact he can always do so by applying to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a sinecure office of nominal profit under the Crown, which is never refused unless a petition has been presented against the applicant's previous return.

the majority of the House. After many delays, a strong Court of Appeal[1] held, first, that Mr. Bradlaugh had not taken the oath according to law, and, secondly, that not having any religious belief, he was incapable of taking an oath at all.[2] The main ground of this decision was that no one could be legally sworn for any purpose, unless he acknowledged a God who would punish him for perjury either in this world or the next. Such an absence of belief might be proved in evidence, like any other fact, and need not be avowed by the party himself. It was therefore quite impossible for Mr. Bradlaugh, so said the Judges, to take his seat in the House of Commons until he were relieved by statute of the condition imposed upon him by the Parliamentary Oaths Acts.

1885. Jan. 28. His legal incapacity.

General interest in Bradlaugh's case had been almost exhausted outside Northampton and St. Stephen's. A conspiracy which seemed to aim at destroying London by dynamite was both novel and alarming. The sudden introduction, and rapid passage, of the Explosives Act in 1883 were abundantly justified by this atrocious plot, which included the simultaneous wreckage of the railway stations at Victoria, Paddington, Charing Cross, and Ludgate Hill. Only at Victoria did the explosion actually occur, and even there nobody was hurt, for it happened in the middle of the night. But the elaborate nature of the machinery used, and the fact that it was American, showed that the savage threats of the *Irish World*, published in New York, were not so contemptible as had been supposed. For participation in this crime, a former Fenian named Daly, and one Egan, with whom he had lodged at Birmingham, were sentenced respectively at the Warwick Assizes to

Dynamite in London. Feb. 26, 1884. Aug. 1.

[1] Brett, M. R., Cotton and Lindley, L. J. J.'s.
[2] See *Attorney-General* v. *Bradlaugh*, L. R. xiv. Q. B. D. 667–720.

1885. penal servitude for life, and for twenty years. This wholesome severity was not, however, sufficient to put the dynamiters down, for their most daring atrocities were committed at the beginning of 1885. Having failed with cloakrooms and platforms, they tried more august precincts. On the 24th of January there was an explosion in the old banqueting-room of the Tower, which cruelly injured innocent and helpless persons. At Westminster on the same day, a bolder, though not a wickeder, attempt was made. Parliament was not sitting, and the House of Commons was open to the public. A parcel of dynamite left under the Treasury Bench blew Mr. Gladstone's usual seat into the gallery, and strewed the House with fragments of timber. Still more disastrous results were averted by the heroic courage of a policeman, for which he received, through Sir William Harcourt, the Albert Medal from the Queen. Finding a suspicious packet on the steps of the crypt under Westminster Hall, Constable Cole picked it up, carried it until he could bear the heat no longer, and then threw it down the steps on to the pavement outside. He himself fell into the chasm which it had made, and was stunned, but he escaped without serious injury, and by his heroism saved the lives of many harmless visitors. The authors of this outrage were not at the time discovered. But at the Tower two men were caught, and consigned in due course to convict prisons. Although the choice of a day in the Recess may be taken to show that intimidation rather than murder was the primary object of the dynamiters, they excited no more sympathy, nor even pity, than if they had been wild beasts. So far as they intended to promote the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, they certainly failed. For, while no Irish Member was ever proved to have the slightest connection

Explosion in the House of Commons.

Heroism of a constable.

with them, they besmirched the cause of Irish Nationalism with the taint of fiendish crime. 1884.

So soon as the address had been voted in 1884, Sir Henry Brand laid down his high office, and retired to the House of Lords from the Chair. In his choice of a successor Mr. Gladstone was singularly fortunate. Mr. Goschen and Mr. Whitbread both declined the honour. Mr. Arthur Peel, Member for Warwick, youngest son of the great Sir Robert, had sat in the House for twenty years, and held some minor offices, without seeking prominence in debate. But the exquisite felicity of the language and the manner in which he interpreted his unopposed election as a tribute to his illustrious father were the fitting prelude of a Speakership which conferred new dignity upon the House of Commons. Feb. 22. Election of Speaker Peel.

One of the first, and one of the most useful, acts performed by Mr. Gladstone's Administration in 1884 was immediately due to a distinguished opponent. Lord Salisbury moved, in a wise and humane speech, for a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor, which the Government at once appointed. But the movement from which the Commission proceeded was not originally due to politicians at all. Since the autumn of 1883 the housing of the poor had been a prominent topic with philanthropists and ministers of religion. A pamphlet called *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, by a Nonconformist divine, Mr. Reaney, who afterwards took orders in the Church of England, had a very large sale, and drew general attention to the fact that the working classes of the metropolis too often lived under conditions equally injurious to morals and to health. The president of the Statistical Society, Mr. Giffen,[1] in his annual address, while arguing and showing that the condition of The Housing Commission. Feb. 22.

[1] Afterwards Sir Robert Giffen.

1884. British workmen had materially profited during the past twenty years, both by higher wages of labour and by shorter hours of work, admitted that their house-rent was at least half as much again.[1] Sir Richard Cross, himself the author of an Artizans' Dwellings Act, passed nearly ten years before, contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1884, an interesting article on the practical possibilities of the case. He pointed out that previous legislation, such as Torrens's Act in 1868, and his own, did provide for making unhealthy houses healthy at the expense of the owner, but that they had not been properly carried out. Such statutes require public opinion to enforce them, and society was only just beginning to realise that the welfare of the poor is a moral obligation. Although much of the evil was caused by the negligence and indifference of the dwellers in the slums themselves, Miss Octavia Hill, the highest living authority on the subject, had told a Parliamentary Committee that one way to improve a poor lodger was to improve the house in which he lodged. The first difficulty was to make local authorities move. "Anything for an excuse," was Sir Richard's concise summary of their plentiful objections. Rehousing was even more difficult than demolition, and the London Trades Council, a representative body of workingmen, began by protesting against the block system. The Peabody buildings, however, erected by the trustees of an American millionaire, who set the example of true generosity by giving away his money in his lifetime, were gradually removing a prejudice due to lack of experience, and had covered with excellent lodgings no fewer than six sites bought under the Act of 1875 from the Metropolitan Board of Works. One drawback to model dwellings of this

[1] See *Times*, Nov. 21, 1883.

type was that the rents were too high for men not in good and constant employment to pay. It was, however, a great step in advance that both political parties, and many persons who belonged to neither party, were, after many years of neglect, at last taking up the matter in earnest. An exceedingly able book called *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George, an American Socialist, was also useful, not so much for the soundness of its conclusions, or the practicability of the "single tax" which it proposed, as for the emphasis which it laid upon urgent social problems demanding a speedy solution. Various agencies were at work in the direction of social reform, from sanitary dwellings to street drinking-fountains, promoted by Lord Brabazon,[1] a pupil of Lord Shaftesbury. Toynbee Hall, a settlement of Oxford men in the East of London, was founded in memory of a brilliant enthusiast, who died prematurely just as he had completed his career at Balliol. First in a series of efforts to promote the sympathy and union of classes, Toynbee Hall did something to link by bonds of friendship what Disraeli called the "two nations" of rich and poor. The first head of it was Samuel Barnett, Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, who possessed the faculty of inspiring others with his own zeal for social amelioration. Mr. Barnett had before his eyes, he said, "an Ireland in England, people paying three or four shillings a week for rooms smaller than Irish cabins, without the pure air of the Irish hillside, and with vice which adds depth to squalor."[2] Such men do more than Parliament, and yet there was much that Parliament could do. Overcrowding, and defective water-supply, especially in London, were the principal evils which called for a cure. Sir 1884.

[1] Afterwards Earl of Meath.
[2] See *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1884.

1884. Charles Dilke, President of the Local Government Board, was Chairman of the Commission, and, as if to show that it had nothing to do with party, the Prince of Wales, who had delivered his maiden speech in favour of Lord Salisbury's motion, accepted a seat. Lord Shaftesbury and Cardinal Manning, who agreed in philanthropy as much as they differed in religion, joined the Commission with Mr. Broadhurst as a representative of the working classes, and a suffragan Bishop of the Establishment, Dr. Walsham How. Use and wont proved unhappily too strong for the appointment of Miss Hill, who knew more about poor people's houses than any man, so that she could only give evidence instead of taking it. Otherwise the Commission was as strong as the issue of it was opportune.

The secondary measures of the Government in 1884 were for the most part failures. Mr. Chamberlain's elaborate Bill for the protection of life at sea by restricting marine insurance had to be dropped for want of time, and because he could not arrive at a friendly arrangement with the ship-owners.[1] Mr. Childers could not pass his Gold Coinage Bill, which would have paid for the restoration of worn sovereigns to their proper value by slightly debasing half sovereigns, and treating them as token coins, thus, in the strange political economy of Lord Randolph Churchill, lowering the wages of the British workman. Having no surplus, he could do nothing with his Budget, and later in the year the campaign in the Soudan brought up the Income Tax from fivepence to sixpence. His Bill for the partial and voluntary conversion of the National Debt was too mild not

Merchant Shipping Bill.

Gold Coinage Bill.

[1] When the Bill was dropped, Mr. Chamberlain tendered his resignation, which, however, Mr. Gladstone persuaded him to withdraw.

to become law, or to effect its purpose. The Postmaster-General was more successful in dealing with the remarkable invention of the telephone. This mode of carrying on oral conversation at an indefinite distance was held by the Judges to be an infringement of the monopoly vested in the Post Office. But they recommended the Companies to mercy, and Mr. Fawcett granted licences for the use of public or private wires. The terms were a royalty of 10 per cent, payable to the Post Office. "The Companies were at once satisfied, and almost his last official act was the approval of a licence embodying these terms."[1] For the career of this strenuous, powerful, and intrepid man was drawing to a close; he had been weakened by serious illness during the winter of 1883, and during the Autumn Session of 1884 he passed suddenly away in the lifetime of both his parents, and in his fifty-second year. No man on either side of politics was more sincerely respected than Henry Fawcett. Even the Irish Nationalists, then at open war with the Government, expressed, through Mr. McCarthy, their sympathetic admiration of the late Minister's commanding and endearing qualities. The esteem inspired by his complete triumph over a calamitous infirmity was enhanced by the independence of his character, the genial exuberance of his irrepressible spirits, and the native vigour of his mind. There was no one quite like him, and his place could not, except officially, be filled. His unfortunate exclusion from the Cabinet had shut him out of general politics for the last four years, and he threw himself with all his practical enthusiasm into the important business of his Department. But as neither fear nor favour ever made him change an opinion, so the powerful interests with which he had as Postmaster to deal were all made

1884.

License of telephones Aug. 7.

Death of Fawcett.

[1] Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, pp. 426–27.

1884. by him subordinate to the one consideration of the public good.

The disturbance of Zululand, and the dissatisfaction of the Boers in the Transvaal, continued to trouble the repose of the Colonial Office. Restoration of Cetewayo. Cetewayo, the deposed king or chief of the Zulus, had been in 1882 brought to England, where he resided for three weeks in Holland Park, became the object of much unwholesome curiosity, and was received at Osborne by the Queen. In the month of August he was most unwisely restored to his dominions, and sailed for South Africa on the 1st of September. Never was the return of an exiled monarch less welcome to his subjects. In July 1883 he was defeated by a rival chief with great bloodshed, and in October he took refuge with the British Resident at Ekowe, where in the following February he died. The policy of Sir Bartle Frere, though repudiated by both parties at home, has been vindicated by events, which proved that an independent Zululand was a chaos of fighting tribes, and a source of perpetual danger to its peaceful neighbours.

A portion of the country was, after Cetewayo's defeat, annexed by the Boers, who also sent Kruger and other Deputies to England for the purpose of procuring changes in the convention of Pretoria. They were substantially successful. Lord Derby Feb. 27, 1884. struck out of the Convention the word "Suzerainty," to which they objected, though he afterwards declared that the Queen still kept whatever rights were given her by the term. As no authoritative definition of Suzerainty has ever been laid down, Lord Derby's argument was a safe one, and in any case a dispute on the subject would be pure logomachy, inasmuch as another Convention, the Convention of London, was substituted for the Convention of Pretoria, and in it the precise extent

of British control was carefully defined. The Boers of the Transvaal received permission to call themselves once more the South African Republic. But if they made a treaty with any foreign Power, except the Orange Free State, it would be subject to the veto of the British Crown, and white men were not to be excluded from living or trading in any part of the Republic, nor to be taxed more heavily than native burghers. Lord Derby held a strong opinion, which he did not hesitate to express, that we were well rid of the Transvaal, and Sir Garnet Wolseley's prediction had been totally forgotten. The stream of immigration which poured into the South African Republic within a few years in quest of gold was neither considered nor foreseen. Trouble, however, arose almost immediately from the relations of the Boers with their black neighbours in Bechuanaland, which lay east of the South African Republic, and north of Cape Colony. The Bechuanas complained of filibustering raids, and the failure of the Government at Pretoria to suppress them. Sir Charles Warren was sent from England as Special Commissioner to protect the natives at the end of 1884, and, after an interview on the frontier with President Kruger, annexed Bechuanaland without resistance by Proclamation to the dominions of the Crown. Under a British Protectorate the Bechuanas were safe, and, in spite of Lord Derby's theories, more black men were added to the subjects of the Queen.

1884.

The South African Republic.

Lord Granville, though he never said a foolish thing, sometimes did an unwise one. Perhaps the unwisest thing he ever did was to quarrel with Prince Bismarck about German colonisation. Bismarck had no sentimental attachment to any country except his own. But he was not hostile to England, and he was too strong a man to pick a

Granville and Bismarck.

1884. quarrel without a cause. Although he disliked Mr. Gladstone's intrusion of morality into politics, as Lord Melbourne resented the preacher's trespass on the domain of private life, he was sincerely anxious to make terms with the only Power that stood in the way of his colonial policy. Bismarck's real interest was in foreign rather than colonial affairs, and the expansion of Germany was forced upon him by the enterprise of German traders. Both Lord Granville and Lord Derby were opposed to any enlargement of the British Empire, and in April 1883 Lord Derby disallowed the annexation of New Guinea by Queensland. As New Guinea is the biggest island in the world, this manifestation of Colonial independence was certainly startling. But it was not without cause, and Lord Derby's suggestion of a common Australian policy came too late, for the German flag was hoisted over the northern coast of New Guinea in December 1884. Part of the Island was Dutch, and a British Protectorate on the southern coast had already been proclaimed. Germany, however, had obtained a footing on territory which the Australians, its nearest neighbours, claimed as British, and at the same time Germany occupied Angra Pequena on the south-west coast of Africa. Against this acquisition Lord Granville vainly protested after a long period of dilatory correspondence, from which Bismarck tried in vain to make out what British policy was. The Cameroons in the Bight of Benin were also seized by Germany at the close of 1884, and the Samoan, or Navigators' Islands, within measurable distance of Fiji, were partly occupied by German troops. The relations between Great Britain and Germany were unpleasantly strained by these proceedings. Lord Derby's principle was plain. He considered the territory under the Colonial Office as ample, and

The case of New Guinea.

Cameroons and Samoa.

he would not take more, even as a gift. Lord Granville objected to everything done by others, and did nothing himself. It is difficult not to sympathise with Bismarck's complaints in the Reichstag of the constant and interminable despatches he received from Downing Street. He was a man of prompt decision, and preferred to deal with those who knew their own minds. At the same time a war with England was the last thing that he desired, and in the Reichstag he emphatically denied its possibility. He liked scraps of rather ugly Latin, and described his method as *do ut des*, a policy of give and take. His friendly speech was followed by a visit to England of his son Count Herbert and a return visit of Lord Rosebery to Germany, which smoothed difficulties that should never have arisen. 1884. March 8, 1885.

A Conference held at Berlin to determine international claims over the African river Congo, which runs a circuitous course from the Mitumba Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean, resulted in the formation of the Congo Free State, with the King of the Belgians as its Sovereign. The British explorer Henry Stanley, to whom European knowledge of the Congo was chiefly due, declined the office of Governor-General, and it was accepted by Sir Francis de Winton. The course of the river was divided into four districts, the one nearest the sea being British, the next German, the third Italian, the uppermost Belgian. It was stipulated that the Sovereignty of King Leopold should be purely personal, and that the Belgian Government should have nothing to do with the Congo State. The Congo Free State. May, 1885.

Lord Derby's proposal of common action by the Australian Colonies was warmly received on their part, and a Conference held in Sydney at the end of 1883 declared for Federation. Australian Federation might even then have been feasible, Australian Federation: Conference at Sydney.

1884. but the movement was taken up in England on too large a scale, and the Imperial Federation League, which held its first meeting in London on the 18th of November 1884, was altogether premature. Mr. Forster, the first English statesman of the front rank who patronised this ambitious scheme, adopted it with his customary enthusiasm, and made numerous converts. But neither he nor they had sufficiently considered the vast extent, and the infinite variations, of the British Empire. The mere existence of India, without which the Empire would be a misnomer, and the government of which requires a statesmanship anything rather than Colonial, is an almost insuperable barrier.

Imperial Federation League.

Colonial help in the Soudan.

A more practical and a more gratifying sign of union between the Colonies and the Mother Country was a spontaneous offer from the Antipodes of assistance in the Soudan campaign. The first proposal of this kind came from New South Wales, which desired to send a battalion of five hundred men with two batteries of guns. South Australia and Queensland followed with similar promises not destined to be fulfilled. The contingent from New South Wales was alone despatched, six weeks after the fall of Khartoum, and received a cordial welcome at Suakin from Sir Gerald Graham. Although they were too late to join in fighting the Mahdi, their patriotism was graciously recognised by the cordial thanks of the Queen, and showed to the world, as well as to Great Britain, that loyalty is fostered by freedom. Lord Derby was not a sympathetic Minister. But he was a remarkably clear-headed one, and the idea of Australian Federation is due to him.

Feb. 12, 1885. New South Wales.

March 29.

County Franchise Bill.

It was on the 28th of February 1884 that Mr. Gladstone introduced his Bill for the enfranchisement of the workingmen in counties. Ever since the year 1873 he had himself been in favour of

this reform, and almost every Liberal candidate had included it in his Address at the General Election of 1880. The Bill was perfectly simple, and contained scarcely anything that was not expected. The household and lodger suffrages which had prevailed in boroughs since 1867 were extended to counties, thus increasing the total number of electors in the United Kingdom from three millions to five. No such vast change had been made by Parliament before. The Reform Act of 1832 added less than half a million, and the Reform Act of 1867 not much more than a million, to the voters on the Register. But the proposed increase did not come wholly from one class. For many parts of England and Scotland outside the limits of Parliamentary boroughs were inhabited by miners, or artizans, just as some towns which had separate representation were inhabited by men working on the land. There was also in the Bill a service franchise for the benefit of those who occupied houses or separate rooms in respect of their employment, and many small householders in suburban districts were city clerks. The whole of the United Kingdom was included in the same Bill, but the redistribution of seats which altered circumstances would necessitate was left over for another year. 1884.

To oppose this measure directly was neither popular nor safe. When it had been read a first time, and printed, the Conservative party developed their tactics in an amendment to the second reading, moved by Lord John Manners, which called for a complete scheme. The reader may perhaps recollect that this was the line taken by the same party in 1866, when a similar demand was made by two Members of Mr. Gladstone's Government, then known as Lord Stanley and Lord Grosvenor.[1] Conservative tactics. March 24.

[1] In 1884 the Earl of Derby, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Duke of Westminster, Master of the Horse.

1884. The subject is one which encourages lively discussion, because the arguments on both sides are strong, and they do not answer each other. From the outset of the controversy it was at once perceived that the real struggle would be in the House of Lords, and the Conservatives in the House of Commons were paving the way for their friends in another place. If, they said, you do not show us your Redistribution Bill until your Reform Bill has been passed, we shall be at your mercy, because, on our rejecting your measure, you can dissolve Parliament without any redistribution at all. If, the Liberals replied, we produce our Redistribution Bill before the Reform Bill has been passed, you can compel us through the House of Lords to substitute your scheme for ours, or to have no Reform Bill. There is only one way out of this dilemma, and it was ultimately adopted. For the present the strife of parties continued in the usual and not very instructive manner. The real point which stands out now, when the din has subsided and the dust has been laid, is the inclusion of Ireland. Ireland was then under a very stringent, though not an arbitrary, Coercion Act. Mr. Parnell had declared that he would take nothing less than Grattan's Parliament, and everybody who knew Ireland was convinced that under the Bill the number of his followers would be doubled.[1] Mr. Forster, with his curious optimism, which no Irish experience could shake, had persuaded himself that the Irish people would rebel against the Parnellite yoke. Lord Hartington, on the other hand, had been persuaded with some difficulty to acquiesce in an operation of which he well knew the inevitable result. Mr. Bright took his stand upon the Act of Union, maintaining that Ireland was entitled by treaty to

Reform and Redistribution.

Inclusion of Ireland.

[1] Bill or no Bill, it would have been largely increased.

the quota of representatives then fixed, and that they could not be diminished without her consent. When the House divided on the second reading, the Government had an unexpected majority of 130. Irish Nationalists were bound to support the enfranchisement of Ireland, and Mr. Goschen was the only Liberal in Great Britain who voted against the Bill. In Committee the exclusion of Ireland was directly raised, and a memorable debate ensued. Mr. Plunket, who represented the University, and could speak for cultivated Protestants, warned the House with classic eloquence that the enfranchisement of Ireland would be the dissolution of the Union. He was met by a greater orator with the nobler plea that the strength of Irish discontent was British injustice, and that now was the time to weaken it by removing its cause. If an equal suffrage had been the real object of the Parnellites, Mr. Gladstone's logic would have been as perfect as his rhetoric. Mr. Plunket knew his countrymen, and did not confound the end with the means. This Irish question, however, divided the Conservatives more than the Liberals. Lord Randolph Churchill, breaking away from his leaders, if he can be said to have had any, attacked Mr. Smith, of the railway bookstalls, and the front Bench, with aristocratic impertinence, as the "suburban lord of pineries and vineries." The exclusion of Ireland was negatived by a majority of 195, and Mr. Parnell "regarded Lord Randolph Churchill with no unfriendly feelings."[1] This matter decided, little remained. An attempt to deprive the rich man of his right to vote in as many constituencies as contained his acres was unceremoniously snuffed out, and woman's suffrage, though supported by Sir Stafford Northcote, was defeated by a plain

1884.

Great majority for Second Reading. April 7.

Plunket and Gladstone.

Churchill and Smith.

May 20.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 44.

1884. intimation from Mr. Gladstone that, if it were carried, he would not be any longer responsible for the Bill. There are many strong arguments for woman's suffrage. There was no argument, strong or weak, for including it in a County Franchise Bill. The fight had now become in the House of Commons a hollow one, and no audible voice was raised against
June 26. the motion that the Bill be read a third time.

It went immediately to the Lords, who stopped its further progress on the 8th of July. The amendment of Lord John Manners was varied rather than modified by Lord Cairns, who repeated
Debate in the Lords. the demand for a complete Bill. In debate the Government were supported by the Duke of Argyll; by an able young Conservative, Lord Jersey; and by Lord Randolph Churchill's brother, the Duke of Marlborough. Lord Carnarvon made the best speech of his life against them. The Archbishop of Canterbury,[1] though a Conservative, expressed the confidence of the Church in the working classes, and ten bishops followed him into the Ministerial Lobby. Lord Salisbury, as Cicero says, lightly perstringed him, and more heavily attacked Lord Fitzgerald,[2] who had denounced the abuse of privilege with a vigour unusual in a Judge. Lord Tennyson was induced by the personal influence of the Prime Minister to vote with very great reluctance for taking the "suffrage
Defeat of the Bill. Gladstone's reply. of the plough." But not one of the minority can have less regretted their defeat.[3] Two days afterwards Mr. Gladstone told the House of Commons that an Autumn Session would be held, and the Bill brought in again. It was not dead, and Lord Salisbury was technically right in saying that the Prorogation, not the vote of the Lords, would kill

[1] Dr. Benson.

[2] It was he who, as Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, had pronounced the Land League to be a criminal conspiracy.

[3] The Contents were, 146; Not Contents, 205; majority, 59.

it. But the Lords wanted to force a Dissolution, and that, Mr. Gladstone told a meeting of his followers at the Foreign Office, was a thing they had no right to do. On the same occasion the Prime Minister made a disclosure which led to an amusing scene in the House of Lords. He mentioned that during the debate on Lord Cairns's amendment Lord Granville had privately offered as a compromise that the Bill should be accompanied by an address from both Houses binding Government to deal with Redistribution next year, but that Lord Salisbury declined parleying "with a rope round his neck." He subsequently explained that these words were not Lord Salisbury's, but his own. Lord Salisbury in the House of Peers protested against this speech as misleading, and a betrayal of confidence. As soon as he sat down, Lord Granville and Lord Cairns rose simultaneously to continue an irregular discussion. The Lord Chancellor was powerless, and they stood facing each other across the table until the House divided, and Lord Granville had a majority of one. As his version of the facts was not contradicted by Lord Cairns, the issue of priority was hardly momentous. A more serious question was raised a few days afterwards, when Lord Wemyss and Lord Shaftesbury proposed that the Franchise Bill should be passed in reliance upon the Prime Minister's promise to forward a Redistribution Bill next year. But the regular Opposition wanted it the same year, and defeated Lord Wemyss by fifty votes. Ministers were now committed to a fight with the Lords, and the public mind was affected by the excitement of the fray. Fifty thousand, or, as some said, a hundred thousand persons assembled in Hyde Park, and a procession of agricultural labourers marched through the principal thoroughfares of London,

1884.
July 10. His speech at the Foreign Office.
July 11. Granville and Cairns.
July 17.
July 21. Procession of agricultural labourers.

1884. capable citizens enough to all appearance, through dense rows of sympathetic spectators. To an July 30. audience of two thousand Liberal Delegates in St. James's Hall, Mr. John Morley proclaimed that "Ended or mended." the House of Lords should be either "mended or ended." All this was on the hypothesis that they would not pass the Bill, and that their demand Aug. 14. Lord Cowper's compromise. for Redistribution was a subterfuge. On the very day Parliament was prorogued there appeared in the *Times* a letter from Lord Cowper, who had supported the Government by voice and vote, urging them to test the sincerity of the Conservatives by introducing both Bills in the autumn. The fatal weakness of this compromise, or surrender, was that the Lords might refuse to pass the principal measure until the subordinate one was modified in the interests of the Conservative party. Compromise, however, that essentially Gladstone's moderation. British notion, was in the air. Mr. Gladstone assured the Queen in a private Memorandum that he was most anxious to close the controversy by any honourable means, and to prevent a still more serious dispute from arising. His speeches in Midlothian were too moderate for some of his followers, who forgot that his object was the enfranchisement of the counties, and not a quarrel with the Lords. The Duke of Richmond, who Sept. 13. was often in two minds, visited Balmoral, but had no definite proposal to make. Then a Conservative newspaper committed a fortunate indiscretion. Oct. 8. Publication in the *Standard*. The *Standard* published the Ministerial scheme for rearrangement of seats. Its authenticity was officially denied, with the further statement that it had not come before the Cabinet. This was literally true, for it had only been drawn up by a Committee of the Cabinet to which Lord Hartington and Sir Charles Dilke belonged. There was nothing unfair in it, parts of it were

not at all favourable to Liberalism, and the most obvious criticism which it suggested was that it did not go far enough. But the real importance of the publication was that it furnished an escape from the dilemma. Secrecy being no longer possible, why should not the details be arranged between the two parties before a Redistribution Bill was brought in? Then the Conservatives would have the assurance for which they asked, and at the same time the Lords would be prevented from using one Bill to enforce their own view of the other. The sea, however, was still rough, and there seemed little prospect of a calm. Mr. Chamberlain let himself go, using language which Lord Salisbury thought "more violent and subversive against the institutions of the country than any Minister had yet employed." A few days before the opening of Parliament Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph Churchill attended a Conservative assembly in Aston Park near Birmingham. A Liberal Meeting was called outside the gates, and the park walls proved as weak as the railings of Hyde Park in 1866. Nothing more animated than tables and flower-beds was injured. But the Conservative speakers could not be heard, and the meeting broke up, as Mr. Lowther wittily put it, "amid chairs." Mr. Chamberlain was accused by Lord Randolph in Parliament of planning and organising this disturbance. But assertion is not proof, and Mr. Chamberlain denied with an affidavit, or rather with several affidavits, that he had anything to do with the riots, or knew of them beforehand. Meanwhile the Queen had suggested private communications between the leaders, and Lord Hartington discovered that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach desired each division of a county to return a single Member.

1884.

Oct. 13. Riots at Aston Park.

1884. The Autumn Session.

When Parliament met on the 23rd of October the Queen's Speech simply announced that "the Bill for the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise would at once be introduced," and in the debate on the Address Mr. Gladstone declined to "pass under the Caudine Forks." Before the middle of November the Bill had again been carried through the House of Commons. This time it divided the Fourth Party, and Lord Randolph Churchill sternly rebuked Mr. Gorst for expressing a hope that it would now become law. But the proceedings in the House of Commons were only beating the air. It was outside Parliament that the principles of Redistribution were settled, and all controversy on Franchise had long been exhausted. When Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote came to tea in Downing Street, the battle was over. Lord Salisbury cared nothing for tradition, but everything for the interests of his party. Sir Charles Dilke represented the Liberal side with no less zeal, and in a week the lines of the Bill were laid down. The Queen's action as a peace-maker had been completely successful. The position of the Lords was unimpaired, a couple of million voters were added to the constituencies, and Parliament had not been dissolved. Inasmuch as the process of redistribution is rather judicial than political, and ought not to be conducted with any idea of party advantage, the Conservative leaders had a right to be consulted so soon as they had given an assurance that the Franchise Bill should pass. Before Christmas the Redistribution Bill was brought in, and proved to be perfectly fair between the two sides, though more timid than in the public interest it should have been. Boroughs with a population of less than fifteen thousand[1] were merged in the counties. Boroughs with fewer than fifty thousand inhabit-

Nov. 19. Conference on Redistribution.

Redistribution Bill.

[1] Fifty thousand would have been a better limit.

ants[1] lost one member if they had two. So did the county of Rutland. Two members were taken from the City, which had four, and thirty-seven were given to the rest of London. Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield received additional members, being divided, as was every town having more than two representatives, into wards with one member each. The limit of a hundred and sixty-five thousand was fixed for this purpose, while the counties, except Rutland, were all divided, so that the only constituencies where an elector could vote for two candidates, besides the City of London, were towns with more than fifty thousand inhabitants, but less than a hundred and sixty-five thousand. When Parliament adjourned for Christmas, the Franchise Bill had peacefully passed the Lords, and the Redistribution Bill had been read a second time in the House of Commons. The Government, however, had lost the services of Mr. Courtney, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who resigned, as would Mr. Fawcett if he had been alive, because the principle of proportional representation had been ignored. For the first time since the Union an addition was made to the numbers of the House, Scotland receiving twelve more seats, while England and Ireland remained as they were. This was a practical mistake. The House was already too large, and a reduction to five hundred would have been a great improvement.

1885.

Dec. 6.

Resignation of Mr. Courtney.

When the House of Commons came to the clauses of the Seats Bill in March 1885 they found that they could only ratify a settlement made outside. Although Sir Michael Hicks-Beach took the opportunity of breaking away from Sir Stafford Northcote, and openly allying himself with the Fourth Party, the Bill could not be touched.

Seats Bill settled outside Parliament.

[1] It should have been a hundred thousand.

1885. Parliament was for the moment paralysed, and power had passed from Committee of the whole House to a Committee of four. Such was the inevitable result of a compromise suggested by the Queen, and dictated by the necessities of the case. The scheme of redistribution was much the largest ever framed, and throwing it at the House without previous arrangement would probably have ended in chaos. A satisfactory, if not a perfect arrangement was reached by consent, and consent was reached by assuming that the just balance of parties promoted the welfare of the State. If, on the one hand, the Lords had secured their ostensible object when Franchise was accompanied by Redistribution, the Government, on the other hand, had passed their great reform, and the working population in counties had got the vote. The constitutional student will observe that the only impartial factor in the problem was the Sovereign herself. The House of Commons was controlled by one party, the House of Lords by another. The Conservatives in both Houses pursued the same tactics, and the only difference was that while Mr. Gladstone had a majority in the Commons, Lord Salisbury had a majority in the Lords. Lord Salisbury was contending for the interests of his party, not for the privileges of his order. If he intended either to force a Dissolution or to delay the Bill he failed. If he merely desired to protect Conservatives against "gerrymandering," or unfair manipulation of constituencies, he succeeded. The diatribes against democracy in which he abounded were oddly illustrated by his assent to a measure which regarded neither wealth nor class, but numbers alone. The only mitigations of its purely democratic character were the University seats, and the ubiquitous vote.

CHAPTER XI

THE FALL

THE year 1885 was a critical year in the history of England, and it proved fatal to Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. The most impulsive member of that body was the President of the Board of Trade. Mr. Chamberlain's speeches were read with attention, and without approval, at Windsor. His description of taxing the rich as ransom, his reference to those who toil not, neither do they spin, but yet have acquired power through their ancestors, and by means of the services which courtiers render kings,[1] were the subject of royal remonstrance addressed to the Prime Minister, who defended his colleague as best he could. Early in 1885 Mr. Chamberlain made Radical proposals of a definite kind which gave still deeper offence. He was for free education, for one man one vote, for the payment of Members, for manhood suffrage. A graduated income tax, and the compulsory power of acquiring land for allotments, were also among his proposals,[2] in all of which it was understood that Sir Charles Dilke concurred. Mr. Gladstone did not trouble himself much about these things.

1885.

Mr. Chamberlain's speeches and proposals.

[1] See Creswicke's *Life of Chamberlain*, vol. i. p. 146. The volume of Mr. Chamberlain's Radical speeches, edited by Mr. Lucy, has long been out of print. It would be well worth republishing, both from a political and from a literary point of view. This particular speech was made in March 1883.

[2] Morley's *Gladstone*, iii. 174.

1885. He had taken Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke into his Cabinet as representatives of the Radical party. It was not his habit as Prime Minister to notice speculative differences of opinion among his colleagues until they were embodied in proposals for immediate action. Outside the Government the new Radicalism worked like leaven on popular ideas.

Renewal of the Crimes Act. The question which really disturbed the Cabinet of 1885 was raised by the Irish Crimes Act, which would lapse if it were not renewed before the prorogation of Parliament. Lord Spencer's government of Ireland had succeeded as signally as Mr. Forster's failed. The Lord Lieutenant had broken up the Invincibles; hanged the Phœnix Park murderers, and many others; restored at least the superficial semblance of tranquillity, and reduced agrarian outrages almost to the vanishing point. His able lieutenant, Mr. Trevelyan, felt the incessant strain, combined with his work in the House of Commons, so much that he was relieved of a thankless task, and entered the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy in place

Oct. 22, 1884. of Mr. Dodson, created Lord Monk Bretton. The vacancy at the Irish Office was filled by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, against whose imperturbable humour the waves of Celtic enthusiasm beat in vain. Lord Spencer stayed in Ireland, and pressed for a renewal of some few clauses in the Coercion Act, such as the right of inquiry, without which he could not have discovered the Invincibles, and the power of summoning special juries, without which he could

Feb. 10. not have convicted them. Early in 1885 the Cabinet was strengthened by the entrance of Lord Rosebery, who became Lord Privy Seal and First Commissioner of Works. At the same time the Radical section was recruited by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Fawcett's successor as Postmaster-General. Matters

on the Conservative side were not easy. Lord Randolph Churchill had long been fretting against the inactive Leadership of Sir Stafford Northcote, looking rather to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach for his temporary Leader in the Commons, and to Lord Salisbury for Leader of the party as a whole. Sir Stafford Northcote, with all his courtesy, was not the man to yield his proper claims, and there was thus as much unrest on one side as on the other. 1885. Conservative discontent.

At this point, during the Easter holidays, the Conservatives lost their greatest lawyer, Earl Cairns, who died on the 2nd of April, aged sixty-five. As a Judge he had no superior, and in political debate he was almost as eminent as he had been in professional practice. Without originality of mind, or fertility of ideas, he made his mark so soon as he entered the House of Commons by sheer intellectual force, and in the Cabinet he had been Lord Beaconsfield's most trusted ally. Cold, austere, and repellent in manner, with no love of society, and no amusement except hunting, he was excellent as a confidential negotiator, though he did not repeat in the case of the Franchise his success with the Irish Church. Since Lord Hardwicke there had been no greater Chancellor, and he was removed just as his party stood most in need of him. Death of Lord Cairns.

For it was becoming evident that the Government could not go on. A majority of fourteen votes, made up by its own Members, had saved it from censure for the loss of Khartoum, and after much deliberation Mr. Gladstone had induced his colleagues to remain in office. But Ireland had brought them to the verge of disruption. Lord Spencer pressed for a partial renewal of the Crimes Act, with a Land Purchase Bill, and a Local Government Bill.[1] Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Charles Divisions in the Cabinet.

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, iii. 190.

1885. Irish policy.

Dilke, and Mr. Lefevre were for a Central Administrative Board, with jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, though otherwise supporting Lord Spencer, inclined strongly to their view, which it was known that Mr. Parnell regarded with favour. But "when it came to the full Cabinet," after consideration by a Committee "it could not be carried. All the Peers except Lord Granville were against it. All the Commoners except Lord Hartington were for it." "Within six years," said Mr. Gladstone, "if it please God to spare their lives, they will be repenting in sackcloth and ashes." [1] This was on the 9th of May. Ten days afterwards, when the Prime Minister gave notice of a Land Purchase Bill, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke resigned. Although they were persuaded to suspend their resignations, they were not the only dissatisfied Ministers, and the Cabinet was on the point of breaking up. Whether Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues could have passed their modified Coercion Bill is extremely doubtful. They were not destined to try.

Resignations.

Before coming to the actual story of their overthrow, the relations of the Conservatives with the Parnellites require a few words. Lord Spencer's position in Ireland, like the shield in the fable, had two distinct aspects. Crime, disorder, open outrage, he had, as we have seen, put down. Against popular feeling he was powerless, and never had the national sentiment of Ireland been more bitterly inflamed against England. The courage and coolness of the Viceroy were respected even by extreme and irreconcilable Nationalists. His administration, and even his character, were attacked in Mr. William O'Brien's paper, *United Ireland*, with a venomous scurrility which few civilised Govern-

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, iii. 194.

ments would have patiently endured. Boycotting and intimidation, which the law could not directly reach, were rife. The existence of the Irishman who set himself against the National League was not a happy one. But nothing brought more clearly before English eyes the social condition of Ireland than a visit which the Prince and Princess of Wales paid to the sister kingdom in the month of April. The object of their journey was not, of course, in any sense political. Yet it raised almost as much ferment as if it had been a new Coercion Bill. Nationalist journals represented it as an exercise of Royal influence on behalf of Lord Spencer, and Mr. Parnell, in a letter to *United Ireland*, advised that the recognition of the Prince[1] should be left to "the garrison of officials, and land-owners, and place-hunters who fatten upon the poverty and misfortunes of the country."[2] The Irish people improved upon the advice. Only at Belfast, which is in Ireland without being of it, were the Royal visitors received with any popular enthusiasm. In Dublin the Lord Mayor hung the green flag of Irish nationality over the Mansion House in place of the Royal Standard. At Cork a body of Nationalists who wished, quite unconstitutionally, to put before the Prince their case against Lord Spencer, were dispersed by the police. Black flags were displayed on the route, and the inscription "We will have no Prince but Charlie"[3] was not unfrequently seen. It appeared that Ireland was the one part of the Queen's dominions where the Heir to the Throne could not reckon upon a cordial welcome, and the warm-hearted hospitality of the Irish nature made the exception more conspicuous.

1885.

Intimidation in Ireland.

April 11.

Prince of Wales's visit.

Hostile reception.

Meanwhile the Conservatives and the Parnellites

Conservatives and Parnellites.

[1] He did not mention the Princess.
[2] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 42.
[3] Mr. Parnell.

1885. had been voting together in the House on almost every question except the Franchise Bill. At each stage of the Egyptian controversy the Opposition could reckon upon Parnellite votes. This conjunction implied no alliance. There is only one lobby in the House for those who wish to vote against a Government. On the 24th of February, however, there was exhibited a curious and interesting scene. The Speaker[1] put the closure into force for the first time with the object of suppressing Irish obstruction. A debate could then only be closed on the initiative and responsibility of the Chair, embodying, as was supposed, the general sense of the House. If the minority exceeded forty, the closure could not be carried by less than two hundred votes. On this occasion there were not ten votes to spare. If the motion had not been adopted, if there had been eight fewer members in the majority, the Speaker would probably have resigned. Yet some Conservative Leaders left the House, while others, including Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Sir Hardinge Giffard, voted in the minority. Although dislike of the closure may account for this singular performance, it led not unnaturally to the belief that between Mr. Parnell and the front Opposition Bench there was some sort of an understanding.

Sir Gavan Duffy.

At this time an Irishman of influence and distinction, who had held high offices in Australia, Sir Gavan Duffy, was endeavouring to convince the Conservatives that they, not the Whigs, had always been the true friends of Ireland. His channels of communication were in public the *National Review*, to which Lord Salisbury was a contributor, and in private Lord Carnarvon, a statesman of the most chivalrous honour, who believed, without any thought of office, that Home Rule was at least

[1] Mr. Peel.

worthy of serious consideration. Duffy himself was respected by most classes of Irishmen, not least by Parnell, to whom he preached moderation, and reliance upon Parliamentary means. Although he had been three times put upon his trial for treason, he was thoroughly loyal to the Crown, and he was the one Irish Nationalist who had enjoyed the friendship of Thomas Carlyle. Lord Carnarvon was also his personal friend, and fully shared his belief that, with adequate securities, Home Rule might be granted to Ireland.[1] But he wisely declined to be hurried. "My belief is," he wrote on the 18th of March, "that till the General Election is over and both parties know their strength, any attempt to settle this great controversy will not only be hopeless, but will distinctly prejudice the result; and if this is so, it is clearly one of those cases in which the best chance of a settlement lies in some — and not a very long — delay." Duffy was unreasonably disappointed by Lord Carnarvon. It was far more surprising that a Conservative, and a real Conservative, should go so far than that he should go no farther. Of Lord Randolph Churchill, on the other hand, who was scarcely a Conservative in name, and certainly not a Conservative in fact, it was natural that the Parnellites should have high hopes. Lord Randolph, who had made himself by natural ability the most powerful member of the Opposition in the House of Commons, professed to be a Tory Democrat. Tory Democracy has never been, and perhaps cannot be, defined. Democracy means government by the people. Tory means, if it means anything, a supporter of high prerogative. Lord Randolph's object was to make his party popular with the working classes by showing them that they had more to expect from it than

1885.

Lord Carnarvon.

Lord Randolph Churchill.

[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, ii. 68–79.

1885. from the Liberals. His two immediate purposes were to conciliate the Parnellites by dropping Coercion, and to get rid of the "old gang," in particular Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Richard Cross, and Mr. Smith, who in his opinion were obstacles to the construction of a democratic platform. He did not at that time aspire to lead the Opposition himself. He was only thirty-six. But he thought, not without reason, that he might count upon Lord Salisbury and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. To turn out the Government the votes of the Parnellites would be required. Would they be given, as they had been given before, without consideration? If not, or if it were desired to make assurance doubly sure, what was the consideration to be? It has never been proved, and the Conservatives have always denied, that there was at this time any compact between the Parnellites and them. Mr. Justin McCarthy, on the other hand, asserted in public less than three years afterwards that he obtained through the Tory Whip from Lord Salisbury, with whom he never directly communicated, a promise not to renew the Crimes Act, or any part of it. The Whip may have exceeded his instructions, or Mr. McCarthy may have misunderstood him. What is material, and undeniable, is the firm belief of the Parnellites that if they displaced Mr. Gladstone's Administration, the Crimes Act would not be renewed.

The Hundred Million Budget.

The point chosen for common, or at least simultaneous attack, was the Budget, introduced by Mr. Childers on the 30th of April. It was well selected. For while there was much to be said for the means by which Mr. Childers proposed to meet his deficit of nearly fifteen millions, and indeed very little to be said against them, the national expenditure under a Government which boasted of its economy had reached the sum of a

hundred millions, then regarded as appalling. The vote of Credit accounted for eleven millions, leaving eighty-nine millions which might be called ordinary outlay. Three millions had been added to the Navy Estimates in consequence of a panic, or scare. In the autumn of 1884 the *Pall Mall Gazette*, edited by Mr. Stead, the successor of Mr. Morley, published a series of able articles on the relative strength of the French and British fleets. The avowed object of these papers was to increase official outlay, not only on battleships, but on torpedo-boats, guns, ports, and coaling-stations. The writer pointed out that the Admiralty was spending less than it spent in 1868, although British trade over-seas, and consequently the mercantile marine, were almost half as large again. In fact the French vote for shipbuilding was only some two millions behind our own. Lord Northbrook, on his return from Egypt, endeavoured in the House of Lords to explain these figures away, and proved that during his term of office the tonnage of ships in construction had much increased. But he practically admitted the substance of the case against him by announcing that there would be a large addition of torpedo-boats, as well as of cruisers to protect commerce, that another million would be devoted to naval ordnance, and that more protection would be given to commercial harbours. For all this the Chancellor of the Exchequer had of course to find ways and means. He proposed that the Income Tax should be brought up from sixpence to eightpence; that the succession duties should be slightly raised; that the duty on spirits should be increased by two shillings a gallon, and the duty on beer by a shilling a barrel; that a small duty should be imposed on corporate property; and that the Sinking Fund should be suspended. This was a perfectly fair and reasonable

1885.

"The truth about the Navy."

Dec. 2, 1884.

1885. Budget. What astounded the country, and injured the Government, were the vast sums that had been spent with little or nothing to show for them, and the enormous deficit for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to estimate. If Khartoum had been relieved, and Gordon had been saved, the nation would have been in a humour to pay anything required. To pay for blunders and disasters, though a necessary, is not an agreeable process. Before the second reading of the Budget Bill came to be moved, the Conservative Leaders carefully examined the situation, and drew up an amendment, artfully framed, which struck at the root of Mr. Childers's scheme. They probably knew that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke had threatened to resign again rather than be responsible for the increase of the duty on beer. They certainly knew that the landed interest on both sides of the House would resent an extra duty on real property without a further subsidy for local rates.

Amendment to the Budget Bill.

June 8. Accordingly Sir Michael Hicks-Beach moved that the duties on beer and spirits should not be raised without a corresponding rise in the duty on wine, and that the new succession tax was unjust if not accompanied by a further grant from the Treasury for local purposes. Weakening in the face of the enemy, Mr. Childers took off half the additional duty on spirits, and agreed to increase the beer duty for twelve months only. But it was too late. The weapon of a penal dissolution had been wrested from the Government's hands. There could not well be an appeal to the old constituencies, and it had been arranged by accelerating the Register that there should in the autumn be an appeal to the new. The division was taken unexpectedly at the close of the first night's debate, the whipping was slack, and a great many Liberals were absent unpaired. Although Mr. Forster and

Mr. Goschen both voted for the Budget, the Government was beaten by twelve votes, and the cries of "Coercion" from the Irish benches, showed plainly enough who had dealt the blow.[1] The Government at once, and with alacrity, resigned. 1885. Defeat of the Government.

Mr. Gladstone has recorded in his Diary that this was "a considerable event." How considerable did not immediately appear. It may be doubted whether any other Cabinet has left office with such eagerness as the Cabinet of 1885. They had been acutely divided on Egypt, and on Ireland. They were within an ace of resigning after their narrow victory on the question of the Soudan. They had long been at sixes and sevens. They were now free from the hateful necessity of legislating for Ireland. Their Franchise Bill had been carried without substantial change, and their Redistribution Bill had reached its final stage in the House of Lords. The Irish Land Act was a great monument of their power, and they had ensured that, when the country was consulted, there would be no local exclusion of the working classes. The farmer no longer paid, or thought he paid, the malt tax. His crops were protected from the ravages of game, and he was sure of compensation for improvements on his holding. The Dissenter had a right to his own service in the churchyard of his own parish. Workmen were better protected against accidents than ever they had been before. The property of married women was as much theirs by statute as though they were single. The law of bankruptcy stood at last on a sound footing, and the purchase of votes at Elections had become a perilous, unprofitable enterprise. Against these Gladstone's resignation.

[1] There were, however, more than seventy Liberal absentees, and great pressure had been put upon Members by the most powerful trade in the country. Mr. Gladstone did not know till the last moment that there was any danger. See Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 202.

1885. solid achievements in legislation had to be set an Egyptian policy which was one long series of blunders between the overthrow of Arabi in 1882 and the Convention of London in 1885. There remained Ireland. What a brave and resolute man could do Lord Spencer had there done. Serious agrarian crime had ceased to exist. Those Invincibles who had not perished on the scaffold were in penal servitude, and the dislocated foundations of society had been restored. The spirit of nationality, on the other hand, was as strong as it had ever been, and the extension of the franchise was sure to strengthen it still further. The Parnellites in the House of Commons made up the recent majority against the Government more than three times over. Mr. Parnell was avenged on Lord Spencer, and had him turned out of Dublin Castle, by adroitly using one British party against the other. Mr. Forster put him in prison, and as he left prison Mr. Forster left Downing Street. Lord Spencer had carried coercion against him, and he had carried conciliation against Lord Spencer. Against a Coalition he would have been powerless. But he believed that such a Coalition was impossible, and he reckoned on getting what he wanted from his new friends. How far he was satisfied, how far he was disappointed, what other allies he sought and obtained, it will be for the final volume of this History to show.

CHAPTER XII

CHURCH AND STATE

1876-85. WHATEVER may have been the grounds of the Public Worship Regulation Act, its results were neither pacific nor satisfactory. The first case under the new statute went smoothly enough, so far as the Courts were concerned. It was a prosecution directed against the Rev. Charles Ridsdale, incumbent of St. Peter's, Folkestone, in the diocese of Canterbury, for a variety of practices alleged to be at variance with the rubric in the Book of Common Prayer. The whole ground of Ritualism was traversed, and Lord Penzance, feeling himself concluded by authority, pronounced on all material points against Mr. Ridsdale. Mr. Ridsdale appealed to the Judicial Committee on the questions of vestments, wafer bread, and the eastward position. Unusual importance was attached to this proceeding. The Public Worship Act had not indeed altered the substance of the law. But the Court from which the appeal came was new, and in Hebbert *v.* Purchas, the latest authority, the respondent had not been represented by counsel. It was therefore determined to hear the case on its merits, and a tribunal of imposing strength assembled for the purpose. There were ten lay Judges, and five clerical Assessors.[1] Judgment

Feb. 3. Clifton *v.* Ridsdale.

Jan 23, 1877.

[1] The Judges were Lord Chancellor Cairns, Lord Selborne, Lords Justices Brett, James, and Amphlett, Chief Baron Kelly, Sir James

1876-85. was delivered by the Lord Chancellor on the 12th of May, and, except on one point, commanded general assent. As regards the eastward position, the Committee arrived at a reasonable compromise. The celebrant was left free to face the east, or to face the south, as he pleased, provided that the act of consecration could be seen by the people. The use of wheaten bread was enjoined, but it was held not to have been proved that Mr. Ridsdale used any other, and on these two points judgment went in his favour. The real difficulty was the question of vestments, and there the Committee went the other way. Affirming Hebbert *v.* Purchas, and laying down the law as it has ever since remained, they pronounced the surplice to be the only legal garb for parochial clergymen "at all times of their ministration," including the time of Holy Communion. Conscious that the plain terms of the Ornaments Rubric, enacted in 1662, were against them, their Lordships held that it was not complete in itself, but must be read with the Advertisements of Elizabeth, issued in 1566, which they regarded as statutory,[1] and therefore having the force of law. It followed from this principle of interpretation that vestments authorised by the First Prayer-Book of Edward the Sixth, and condemned by the Second, were not lawful, if Queen Elizabeth had taken order against them, and that the Ornaments Rubric did not mean what it said. The historical evidence for this conclusion is strong. The wearing of the surplice seems to have been universal, except during the Commonwealth, between the accession of Elizabeth and the restoration of Charles the Second. Nor was it then abandoned for the cope or chasuble, as it

Colvile, Sir Montague Smith, Sir Robert Collier, and Sir Robert Phillimore. The Assessors were Archbishop Tait and the four junior Prelates.

[1] Under 1 Eliz. c. 2.

naturally would have been if the Ritualists were correct. And the Committee were faced with the awkward dilemma that, if the vestments were legal, they were compulsory, or no official garment was compulsory at all. Nevertheless it was a strong, and in England an almost unknown, thing to condemn an accused person when he had on his side the words of a rubric which was part of an Act of Parliament.[1] It is the rule of the Judicial Committee, which differs in this respect from all other English Courts, that the minority are put to silence, and the recommendation to the Sovereign is always apparently unanimous. Lord Cairns, a man of narrow mind, and arbitrary temper, determined to enforce this rule with peculiar severity in the case of Mr. Ridsdale. He revived an old Order in Council, dating from the early part of the seventeenth century, which prohibited Privy Councillors from divulging official secrets. The spirit of this order is most properly observed by the Cabinet, the confidential servants of the Crown. Its application to a legal tribunal created by statute in 1833 was more than doubtful, and one member of the Committee, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, refused to be bound by it. He freely stated, and the statement found its way into print, that Lord Justice Amphlett, Sir Robert Phillimore, and himself, who were not present at the delivery of the judgment, dissented from the majority of their colleagues. He added, in words also published, "It was a judgment of policy, and not of law." The Lord Chancellor was angry, and the High Churchmen delighted. They recalled the fact that Lord Justice James had given at the Bar an opinion opposite to that 1876–85.

[1] "And here it is to be noted that such ornaments of the church and the minister thereof at all times of their ministrations shall be retained and be in use as were in this Church of England by the authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward the Sixth."

1877. which he gave on the Bench, and the Lord Chief Baron became their hero. His views did not carry much weight, for he was not merely old but senile. Sir Robert Phillimore had strong predilections, though not perhaps stronger than the Chancellor's or Lord Selborne's. Sir Richard Amphlett, on the other hand, an excellent lawyer of great natural ability, was as impartial as any Judge could be. A Churchman of the broadest and most secular type, he regarded the dispute as a mere quarrel about clothes, and had no sympathy whatever with the Ritualists, except as the victims of what he thought injustice.[1] Few decisions have been more hotly canvassed than this, and it did not escape serious damage. It was difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with Westerton *v.* Liddell, where the very same rubric had been held to authorise such ornaments of the Church, and such only, as were recognised in the First Prayer-Book of Edward the Sixth. The reply that ornaments of the Church were not ornaments of the Minister struck logical minds as an irrelevant quibble. The compulsory character of the rubric seemed an assumption, and the argument from continuous usage would have authorised the black gown in the pulpit, for which no one had by this time a word to say. The vestments of 1549, though prohibited in 1552, were expressly legalised by Parliament in 1559, "until other order should be therein taken by the authority of the Queen's Majesty." Even if the so-called Advertisements of Elizabeth were this "other order," there was no reference to them whatever in the rubric of 1662, and it is a maxim of English, if not of Scottish, law that non-user cannot repeal

[1] Lord Justice Amphlett said to me, after regretting the Chief Baron's indiscretion in talking about such matters to a stray clergyman, "He was right, however." He added, with an emphasis I can never forget, "It was a flagitious judgment." The Lord Justice was a cautious man, who habitually weighed his words.

a statute. It could at least be argued that vestments were an allowable addition to the necessary surplice, and disinterested students of history, averse as they might be from Ritualism, did not like to see the prosecution get the benefit of the doubt. 1876-85.

Lord Penzance's path, however, was strewn with pitfalls. The Reverend Arthur Tooth, rector of St. James's Hatcham, a parish on the borders of Kent and Surrey, was suspended by him for three months on account of his offences against the law of Ritual. Mr. Tooth treated the sentence with disdain, and continued to behave as before. Thereupon three aggrieved parishioners applied that he should be declared in contempt, and Lord Penzance, adopting a statute of George the Third, "signified" his conduct to the Queen in Chancery. As a necessary result of this proceeding, Mr. Tooth was arrested, and lodged for an indefinite period in Horsemonger Lane Gaol. The majesty of the law had been vindicated, but no reasonable person could be satisfied with the result. That a beneficed clergyman of the Established Church who persistently refuses obedience both to his Bishop and to the Courts of Justice should in the last resort be deprived of the position he has abused may accord with the fitness of things. That he should be put in prison, and kept there for the rest of his life, is scandalous and absurd. Mr. Tooth's opponents were so little pleased with their success that within a month they applied for his release, and he was accordingly set free. His next performance, after a holiday in Italy, where priests are under episcopal rule, was to climb into his church by the window, and conduct an irregular service after his previous manner. Nor did he stop there. How much he respected the law when it was against him he had already shown. When the law was in his favour, he resorted to it without scruple. The secular

The troubles of Lord Penzance.

Mr. Tooth.

Jan. 18, 1877.

Jan. 22.

Feb. 17.

May 18.

1876-85. tribunals have claimed to exercise, time out of mind, a right to restrain by prohibition the excesses of ecclesiastical courts. No part of his multifarious duties was more agreeable to Chief Justice Cockburn than this, and on the application of Mr. Tooth's counsel he decided, with "great regret," that as Lord Penzance had sat at Lambeth, which was neither in London, nor Westminster, nor the diocese of Rochester, to which Hatcham belonged,

Nov. 19, 1877. the trial was a legal nullity. To such an ignominious conclusion did Mr. Tooth's indictment come. Mr. Justice Mellor and Mr. Justice Lush, who were also responsible for this decision, had already prohibited Lord Penzance from dealing

Mr. Dale. with another Ritualistic clergyman, Mr. Dale of St. Vedast's in the City of London, because the Bishop of London, who was a patron of the living, had himself contravened the Public Worship Act by transmitting the representation to the Archbishop, although he was an interested party in the eye of the law. Instead of Lord Penzance putting down Ritualism, it began to look as if Ritualism would put down Lord Penzance. The irony of the situation was heightened by the fact that the power to restrain ecclesiastical tribunals which the secular courts had claimed as a protection against spiritual tyranny was now being used by the Ritualists to protect themselves against a court they denounced as secular.

Clifton *v.* Ridsdale was regarded by extreme High Churchmen as a defeat, and they repudiated, with Dr. Pusey at their head, "the moral authority," whatever that may be, of the tribunal that decided it. The judgment of the Court of Appeal in the

Hertford College. case of Hertford College, Oxford, was a victory for the Church of England against Dissenters, and showed that the University Tests Act of 1871 had a narrower scope than was commonly supposed.

The old Hertford College, where Charles Fox drank and read, had been dissolved in 1805, when its place was taken by Magdalen Hall. Nearly seventy years afterwards, in 1874, the munificence of a Conservative Member of Parliament, who belonged to the opulent house of Baring, provided sufficient funds for the re-endowment of Hertford, and it was once more incorporated as a college by statute. Mr. Baring's generous gift, however, which brought in a revenue of eight thousand pounds a year, was made on condition that the Fellowships and Scholarships founded out of it should be held exclusively by members of the Church of England. This was alleged to be inconsistent with the Tests Act, and dispute arose when a Nonconformist who claimed to be examined for a vacant Fellowship was told that he might be examined, but would not be elected. He abstained from competing, and applied to the Queen's Bench Division[1] for a mandamus ordering the College to examine him "with a view to election." The mandamus was granted, and the College appealed. The Court of Appeal[2] reversed the judgment on a variety of grounds. The Fellowship was full, for another man had been elected. The College was not bound to take the candidate who passed the best examination, and there was nothing to show that the respondent, if he had gone in, would have done better than his competitors. The jurisdiction was in the Visitor, not in a court of law. But the really important part of Lord Coleridge's judgment was that which declared that the Tests Act applied only to colleges existing when it was passed. "We are clearly of opinion," said the Court, "that the University Tests Act does not of itself prevent the creation in the Universities of

1876–85.

May 2, 1878.

[1] Mellor and Lush, J.J.'s.
[2] Lord Coleridge, C.J., Baggallay, Bramwell, and Brett, L.J.J's.

1876-85. fresh colleges, the endowments of which may be confined to the members of a particular religious community." Although the practical consequences of this decision have not been great, Hertford and Keble being the only sectarian colleges at Oxford, while there are, strictly speaking, none at Cambridge,[1] it was a triumph for those who wished to strengthen rather than loosen the tie between the national Universities and the national Church.

Mr. Mackonochie's victory. Mr. Mackonochie, who had a real genius for litigation, succeeded in temporarily bringing Lord Penzance to a more serious pass than ever. Abandoning his appeal to the Privy Council against the sentence of Sir Robert Phillimore, he went to the Queen's Bench, and argued through his Counsel that the Dean of Arches could not, by adding a monition to suspension, make him guilty of contempt, and therefore summarily punishable if he repeated the offence. The Lord Aug. 8, 1878. Chief Justice adopted this view with vehemence, and went so far as to say that neither the Arches Court, nor even Her Majesty in Council, could adopt such a method of enforcing the law. Nor, in Sir Alexander Cockburn's opinion, was the adoption of it a mere error of procedure. It went to the jurisdiction, and vitiated the whole proceedings, so that Mr. Mackonochie was entitled to set them at defiance. This judgment was even then regarded as doubtful law, and is now acknowledged to be worthless. Although Mr. Justice Mellor concurred in it, Mr. Justice Lush, the best lawyer of the three, dissented. The decision, however, was of course operative for the time, and it found Lord Penzance engaged upon another case of the same kind, with a similar end in view. After considering the matter throughout the Long Vacation, he showed his resentment in a fashion

[1] Selwyn and Ridley are not colleges in the full sense of the word.

more novel than dignified. A Judge who sees his Court threatened with virtual extinction may be excused a little natural impatience, and Lord Penzance, while declining to admonish another clergyman of Mr. Mackonochie's persuasion, Mr. Edwards, lest he should be himself prohibited again, took the opportunity of attacking in vituperative language the judgment of the Lord Chief Justice. His legal argument would, if he had been sitting in an appellate tribunal, have been as appropriate as it was able, but from the Court prohibited to the Court prohibiting it was as lawless as anything alleged against Mr. Mackonochie. Nor did it escape notice from the highest quarter. The Lord Chief Justice did not relish being told that he knew nothing of ecclesiastical law, and preferred technicality to substance. In a pamphlet of sixty-four pages, addressed to Lord Penzance himself, he pulverised to his own satisfaction the arguments of his adversary. All this must have been very amusing to Mr. Mackonochie, though it did not increase popular respect for the judicial body, until the Court of Appeal, by a majority of three to two,[1] reversed the decision of the Queen's Bench, and thereupon Lord Penzance sentenced Mackonochie to suspension for three years, with the prospect of losing his benefice if he had not complied with Sir Robert Phillimore's monition by the end of that period.[2]

1876-85.

Nov. 4.

Cockburn *v.* Penzance.

Dec. 8.

By a curious coincidence it was while the authority of Bishops was thus being openly defied that Parliament in 1878 passed an Act for increasing their number. The division of Dioceses

Additional Bishoprics Act.

[1] Lord Coleridge, C.J., James and Thesiger, L.J.J.'s, against Brett and Cotton, L.J.J.'s.

[2] The whole subject is exhaustively treated in the judgment of Lord Justice Thesiger, who, if he had not been prematurely cut off in his forty-third year, would have become one of England's greatest Judges. L.R. 4 Q.B.D. pp. 697 *et seqq.*

1876-85. in populous districts was the object of a Bill introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury,[1] who hyperbolically described it as the most important ecclesiastical statute since the Reformation. The
Aug. 16, 1878. Bill, which became law before the end of the session, provided that the Crown might appoint a Bishop for a new Diocese when a sum of money had been provided from private sources which would yield an income of not less than three thousand five hundred pounds a year. Thus the new Bishops, who were to enter the House of Lords in their turn, would be poorer than the old, and it was not intended that the new Cathedrals should have Deans or Chapters. The *Congé d'Élire* was therefore in these cases abolished, and the Crown was directed to appoint the new Bishops, as it had had the power of appointing all Bishops since the reign of Henry the Eighth, by Letters Patent.

The Public Worship Act of 1874 expressly provided that fewer than three aggrieved parishioners could not set the law in motion against a refractory clergyman, and that the Bishop's consent must be obtained. The Church Discipline Act of 1840 did not in terms require that either condition should be satisfied. In the summer of 1878 a single complainant called upon the Bishop of Oxford[2] to proceed against the Reverend Thomas Carter of Clewer for Ritualistic practices under the earlier
Aug. 10, 1878. statute. The Bishop refused, alleging that these prosecutions were bringing the Church into ridicule; that Mr. Carter, besides being advanced in years, was respected and beloved; and that the great majority of his parishioners approved of what he did. The last argument savoured more of Congregationalism than of a National Church, and the judgment of the Privy Council had not exempted clergymen of high character or venerable age. The com-

[1] Dr. Tait. [2] Dr. Mackarness.

plainant was discontented with the answer, and applied to the Queen's Bench for a *mandamus*, which the Bishop of Oxford, with the laudable object of saving expense, opposed in person. He conducted his case with spirit, and the proverb about the man who is his own counsel had certainly no application to him. But the Court decided against him, and the *mandamus* was granted. The Lord Chief Justice and his colleagues held that the words "it shall be lawful" for the Bishop to issue a commission, or send the matter before the Court of Arches, imported a duty as well as a right, and meant that he must do either the one or the other. The Court of Appeal, where the Bishop appeared by Counsel, reversed the judgment of the Queen's Bench, and then the case went to the House of Lords. Lord Chancellor Cairns, Lord Penzance, Lord Selborne, and Lord Blackburn unanimously and finally held that the Bishop's discretion was absolute, and could not be reviewed by any Court. The Law Lords laid stress upon the fact that the statute of 1840 did not require the prosecutor to be a parishioner, a Churchman, or a Christian, and Lord Penzance, who can hardly have foreseen the momentous consequences of the decision, observed in pungent language, "I cannot think that the intention of this statute was to maintain the discipline of the clergy by vesting the power of legal prosecution, without limit, in the community at large." However that may be (and it is not a result from which the Whigs would have shrunk), the effect of Julius *v.* the Bishop of Oxford[1] was to make the episcopal veto an impregnable barrier against all ecclesiastical prosecutions whatsoever.

1876–85.

March 23, 1880.

After more than six years of miscellaneous litigation, marked by all the glorious uncertainty

Mackonochie in the Lords.

[1] L.R. 5 Appeal Cases, pp. 214–248.

1876–85. of the law, the House of Lords finally settled the case of Martin *v.* Mackonochie. The Law Lords
April 5, 1881. unanimously, and without hesitation, held that the majority in the Court of Appeal were right, that the majority in the Queen's Bench Division were wrong, and that Lord Penzance had not exceeded his powers in suspending Mr. Mackonochie. Lord Penzance was thus relieved of all difficulty in dealing with refractory clergymen, and could punish them for contempt if they disobeyed his monitions. But imprisonment could no more put down Ritualism in England than it could suppress Home Rule in Ireland. A typical and sufficient instance, which will do as well as a dozen, is the
Case of Mr. Green. case of the Reverend Sidney Green. Mr. Green, rector of Miles Platting, in the diocese of Manchester, was committed by Lord Penzance to Lancaster Gaol on the 19th of March 1881. He was a Ritualist, like another, and his practices, which were distinctly illegal, presented no feature of novelty or interest. But the man himself had the spirit of a martyr, and would no more give up his ritual than he would give up his religious belief. It was for him to interpret the formularies of his Church; and, rather than allow any other existing tribunal than his own conscience to interpret them for him, he would remain in prison until he died. Such fortitude commands moral, if not intellectual, respect, and in many fashionable places of worship the prayers of the Church were desired for Sidney Faithorne Green. His protracted confinement became a scandal, and the assistance of the Legislature was invoked. But the House of Commons had something else to do, and at last the Bishop of Manchester[1] himself applied to the Court of Arches for Mr. Green's
Nov. 4, 1882. release. It was at once granted, and Mr. Green

[1] Dr. Fraser.

came out of prison after eighteen months as hardened a Ritualist as ever. He had accomplished his object so far as to prove that the Public Worship Act, administered by Lord Penzance, was at once odious and futile. Nothing was ever heard of him again. 1876–85. Mr. Green's release.

The great Archbishop who had introduced the measure was now drawing to the close of his career. Although his name will always be associated with the Public Worship Bill, the Public Worship Act was Lord Shaftesbury's rather than his. Archbishop Tait had little sympathy with High Churchmen. But he was before all things a Christian, and desired to leave a message of peace. At his request Mr. Gladstone had appointed a Royal Commission on the Ecclesiastical Courts, which at least furnished the Bishops with an excuse for suspending further prosecutions. Mr. Green was neither in his diocese nor in his province. With Mr. Mackonochie, on the other hand, he had been as Bishop of London upon friendly terms, and he now made a last effort to extricate him from the meshes of the law by promoting his transference from St. Albans, Holborn, to St. Peter's, London Docks. It was difficult. For Mr. Mackonochie, though a Christian gentleman, was a stubborn man. When he yielded he signified his consent to the proposal in remarkable words. "I accept," he wrote, "the line of action which your Grace has indicated simply in deference to you as the supreme representative of our Lord Christ in all things spiritual in this land, and not as withdrawing anything which I have said or done in regard to the State Courts." [1] So far as Mr. Mackonochie himself was concerned, the Archbishop's eirenicon came too late. His liability was personal, not local; it followed him wherever May 28, 1881. Mackonochie and Tait.

[1] *Life of Archbishop Tait*, ii. 478.

1876–85. he went; and on the 21st of July 1883, just as the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission had issued their Report, he was finally deprived by Lord Penzance of his position as a beneficed clergyman in the Church of England. But before that time Archbishop Tait had himself been called away. Involved in quarrels which were not of his seeking, for he loved peace and ensued it, hard necessity had driven him to antagonism with an influential party in the Church of England. Except the fundamental truths of the Christian religion, he did not regard any theological doctrine as essential, and he never forgot that he was an officer of the State as well as of the Church. Parliament suited him better than Convocation, and in the House of Lords he spoke with peculiar weight. It was not possible to supply his place, and he was the last of the statesmen-prelates whom an Establishment in the strict sense of the term fosters and requires. Mr. Gladstone, however, who did not really believe in Establishments, looked for qualifications of quite a different kind in the successor it was his duty to nominate. He thought mediæval learning indispensable, though few indeed were the laymen besides himself who had felt this deficiency in Tait. The Queen was for Harold Browne of Winchester, a wise and moderate man, whom Tait had recommended on his death-bed.[1] The ablest Bishop on the Bench was Temple of Exeter. The most learned was Lightfoot of Durham. Mr. Gladstone, after the most anxious and conscientious reflection, proposed Dr. Benson, the first Bishop of Truro and first Headmaster of Wellington, a Conservative in politics, a High Churchman in theology, the antipodes of Tait in character and opinion. Archbishop Benson was an accomplished and scholarly divine, with a mind, if possible, more ecclesiastical

Dec. 3, 1882. Death of Tait.

Appointment of Dr. Benson.

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 95.

than Mr. Gladstone's own. He had little of the secular wisdom and sound practical judgment which Tait possessed in such abundant measure. But if laymen found him less impressive than Tait, clergymen found him more sympathetic, and his appointment did much to reconcile the sacerdotalists whom Tait had estranged. Hating the Erastian principle, while officially bound by it, he resolutely shut his eyes to everything unclerical in the connection between Church and State. The Report of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission, full as it was of learning, chiefly supplied by Dr. Stubbs, made no practical proposal which Parliament could be expected to adopt. But the criticisms it passed upon the Judicial Committee encouraged the Bishops to exercise their veto upon criminal proceedings for irregular ritual, and in this they were supported by the new Primate. Tait survived his old friend Dean Stanley[1] only a few months. They had much in common, though Stanley's independence at Westminster enabled him to promulgate Liberal views with greater freedom and less responsibility. Both were sincere Erastians, holding that the control of the State was the safeguard of freedom in the Church; and whereas Tait was succeeded by a member of the opposite school, the new Dean of Westminster, Dr. Bradley, who had been at Marlborough the most famous teacher of his age, was a less ecclesiastical and more classical Stanley. The choice of Bradley was creditable to Gladstone's fairness of mind. All attempts to expel clerical Broad Churchmen out of the Establishment had now failed, and when Dr. Pusey died in his eighty-third year, his place as Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford was filled by Mr. Driver of New College, a Biblical critic quite untrammelled by tradition. It was in the

1876–85.

Death of Dean Stanley.

Pusey's successor.

Sept. 16, 1882.

Expulsion of Robertson Smith.

[1] Stanley died on the 18th of July 1881.

1876–85. Free Church of Scotland that bigotry at this time broke loose, and Professor Robertson Smith was,

May 17, 1881. on the motion of Principal Rainy, expelled from his chair of theology on the ground that he had published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* heretical

Revised Version of the New Testament. views concerning the Scriptures. This was the year, and indeed the day, on which the Revised Version of the New Testament issued from the Presses of Oxford and Cambridge. Neither it nor the revision of the Old Testament, which appeared in 1885, has ever been authorised for public use in the services of the Church. The learning and scholarship of the Revisers, if not their taste, were indisputable. But the old Authorised Version had become so much a part of the English language, and was so inseparably connected with the lives of Englishmen, that Parliament was not asked to supersede it. The Revisers, while correcting some obvious blunders, and introducing some requisite changes, had marred their work by wanton innovation, such as the change of "charity" to "love" in the great chapter of the Corinthians, which not only spoils the sense, but destroys the music, of the sermon.

Jan. 6, 1885. When the worthy, unimportant Bishop Jackson

Translation of Bishop Temple. died, Mr. Gladstone translated Bishop Temple of Exeter to the diocese of London. Seventeen years before the Church of England had been threatened with disruption by his appointment of the same clergyman to the episcopal Bench. Now the Bishop of Exeter's translation was received with general approval in profound calm. Yet he had retracted nothing, and made no apology. He had simply devoted his remarkable powers of mind and body to the work of his diocese, besides giving the Liberal party a steadfast, though usually silent, support in the House of Lords. Intellect and character are an impregnable defence against the

assaults of theological bigotry. Temple's nomination to Exeter was denounced by Pusey in language of almost incredible fury,[1] yet Pusey's most eminent disciple, Dr. Liddon of St. Paul's, expressed cordial satisfaction with his new ecclesiastical superior. There is nothing easier to live down than rancour, as there is nothing more difficult than living up to popularity. 1876–85.

At the close of the year 1880 English literature suffered an irreparable loss by the death of George Eliot, who had recently become by marriage Mrs. Cross. Less than two months afterwards, and within a few minutes' walk of her house in Chelsea, died, in his eighty-sixth year, Thomas Carlyle, the most picturesque and vivid writer of his time. His own *Memoirs*, published the same year by one of his executors, Mr. Froude, the historian, had the unfortunate result of provoking an interminable controversy on Carlyle's behaviour to his wife, who died fifteen years before him, and on Froude's posthumous treatment of Carlyle. It may be that the individualities of Carlyle and his wife were too strong for union. It is possible that genius should be included in the forbidden degrees. Everything about Carlyle is interesting. But it was not until Froude had produced his memorable biography, of which the first part appeared in 1882, and the second in 1884, that the world realised the full grandeur of the triumph over external circumstances that Carlyle's life had been. His "gospel," as his admirers called it, is not likely to supersede the Christian one. Force cannot be permanently worshipped by intellectual beings, if only because it is mind that moves force, and not force that moves mind. What Carlyle really taught, both by precept and by example, was the failure of materialism to

Dec. 22.

Feb. 4, 1881. Death of Carlyle.

[1] See vol. iii. p. 199.

1876-85. explain the universe, or to make living in it worth while. His acknowledged master was Goethe, whose comprehensive genius he laboured to illustrate and to expound. But he had been brought up on the Bible in a Presbyterian home, and he never got beyond the question, a question only in form, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Death of Darwin. The only man who can be compared with Carlyle for influence upon modern thought was in almost every respect unlike him. Charles Darwin, who died on the 19th of April 1882, aged seventy-three, had sacrificed his health and comfort to the cause of scientific investigation. He was an ideal man of science, to whom reason and experiment were the only trustworthy guides. Even his imagination, which was powerful enough to have made him a great poet, was entirely devoted to scientific purposes, insomuch that at the close of his life the best literature had ceased to interest him. As a naturalist he was supreme, and the doctrine of evolution, in which his researches crystallised, substituted for the old idea of magic or miracle as the origin of things an orderly sequence of regular causes leading up to the Great First Cause of all. Between Carlyle and Darwin there was a great gulf. One ignored science. The other was too apt to think that only science mattered. Darwin was too good, too simple, and too much absorbed in his subject, to see the dangers of materialism, which in its ultimate results is as fatal to the human element as to the divine. But he rendered at least this negative tribute to the spiritual hypothesis, that if science could explain life he would have explained it.

Society for Nationalisation of the Land. A scientific theorist only less eminent than Darwin, and an independent co-operator in discovering the origin of species, Alfred Wallace,

founded in 1881 a Society for resuming to the public the ownership of land. The principle of private property is so essential a part of English life, and so thoroughly pervades all classes alike, that these schemes, interesting enough to discuss, have never taken much practical hold even upon those who raise the value of land by their labour. In Ireland, again, where modes of thought and feeling are anything rather than British, Socialism does not attract the people, because their spirit is acquisitive and individualist. The Social Democratic Federation, of which William Morris, the poet, was an original and leading member, had more success, because it supported the claims of the working classes to a larger share of Parliamentary seats. There were only three workingmen in the Parliament of 1880, and the landed interest was almost as fully represented in a Liberal as in a Conservative House of Commons. The system of government by party is identified, if not identical, with the British Constitution, and "labour candidates," as they are called, have found it practically impossible to arrive at St. Stephen's without the assistance of one party or the other. Those who stood independently, though they often turned the balance, and sometimes upset the scale, have scarcely ever been returned themselves. Party in the United Kingdom is not a mere aggregation of individuals. It is the unit of public life. Political philosophers of more pretension than Mr. Morris are apt to mar their usefulness by not distinguishing between phrases and facts. Sir Henry Maine, who had been a practical legislator in India, and acquired on his return a dread of democracy almost equal to Gibbon's, published in 1885 an eloquent and gloomy treatise on *Popular Government.* Maine was nervously impressed with the want of a written Constitution, such as in his opinion pro-

1876-85.

Social Democratic Federation.

Maine's *Popular Government.*

1876–85. tected the United States from rapid and reckless change. While the American Constitution may be necessary for the protection of State rights, an opponent of revolutionary excess must be difficult to please if he is not satisfied with the combination or alternative of the Conservative party and the House of Lords. Maine's intellect, if not severely practical, was one of the finest ever devoted to the civil service of India. Another was Sir Alfred Lyall's, as appeared from his *Asiatic Studies*, the first series of which came out in 1882. No civil servant had ever made before so serious and sympathetic an examination of Indian religions and religious customs. The author's object was not polemical nor didactic, not to show the superiority of one religion over another, nor to instruct any one in the way of salvation, but to trace the workings of the Indian mind in the study of divine things. It was not so common then as it has since become to discuss these questions in a detached and impartial spirit.

Lyall's *Asiatic Studies.*

1883. *The Expansion of England*, by Professor Seeley[1] of Cambridge, showed how much the acquisition of a new world had to do with the wars of the old. It is a common fallacy of trivial minds that clearness implies shallowness, and that power of expression connotes poverty of thought. Seeley was equally gifted as a writer and as a thinker. His book was the more seasonable and popular because it coincided with the growth of imperial sentiment and a desire to federalise the possessions of the British Crown. It has also a permanent value as an historical demonstration that there are no more fruitful sources of quarrelling and fighting than the unoccupied spaces of the earth. In 1885, the closing year of this volume, the *Dictionary of National Biography* began to run its course. Projected by

Seeley's *Expansion of England.*

Dictionary of National Biography.

[1] Afterwards Sir John Seeley.

Mr. George Smith, the surviving representative of Smith and Elder, and carried out with a princely munificence that disregarded profit or loss, it aimed at supplying, and did in fact supply, a terse and compendious account of every important Englishman, Irishman, or Scot. Its first editor, Mr. Stephen,[1] was himself an accomplished essayist, and contributed some of the most valuable articles. His successor, Mr. Sidney Lee, carried on the work with equal thoroughness, and it is now difficult to realise how a want so obvious was supplied so late. The witty divine who said that the motto for contributors was "No flowers by request," put into four words an excellent epitome of the spirit in which this great enterprise was conducted. 1876–85.

Signed articles on subjects of the day, to which the old Reviews, such as the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh*, and the *Westminster*, were strangers, had been introduced more than ten years before by George Henry Lewes, Editor of the *Fortnightly*. His example was followed in the *Contemporary* by Mr. Knowles, who has already been mentioned as the founder of the Metaphysical Society. In 1877 Mr. Knowles differed with the proprietors of the *Contemporary*, and set up for himself the *Nineteenth Century*, which at once achieved a brilliant success. Tennyson wrote a sonnet for the first number of the new magazine, which attracted an extraordinary collection of famous contributors, including Mr. Gladstone, Professor Huxley, Mr. Goldwin Smith, and the Duke of Argyll. Although a month is a long time to wait for an answer, the *Nineteenth Century* is the only periodical that has rivalled the *Times* in the continuous discussion of actual topics. Many of the questions thus treated were theological, and they were handled with a freedom not hitherto usual in organs neither avowedly sceptical nor professedly The *Nineteenth Century*.

[1] Afterwards Sir Leslie Stephen.

1878. sectarian. A year later Professor Max Müller
The Hibbert Lectures. delivered the first course of Hibbert Lectures on Comparative Religion, which have since done much to educate the thoughtful public in the natural growth of ideas regarded by some as arbitrary, and by others as innate. To this year belong the early
Lecky's *History.* volumes of Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*. Mr. Lecky was a cultivated and academic Irishman, who had already written philosophical works of much interest and power. He resented Froude's attack upon his country, called *The English in Ireland*, and determined, by way of reply, to set forth the true relations of Ireland with England. It was many years before he came to the Act of Union. But quite apart from his condemnation of the penal laws, and his exposure of English selfishness in suppressing Irish trade, his book is valuable for its rare impartiality and for the vast amount of miscellaneous information which accompanies the narrative of events. From the religious bigotry that, on one side or the other, disfigures most Irish works about Ireland it is
1879. conspicuously free. In 1879 died Professor Clifford,
Death of Professor Clifford. the first metaphysician of the age, considered a mathematical genius even at Cambridge, and already in his thirty-fifth year a philosopher of European fame. Clifford propounded a material explanation of consciousness, and was so far in agreement with Herbert Spencer, whose *Data of Ethics* extended the doctrine of evolution from physical to moral development. Another Cambridge man, younger than Clifford, who afterwards rose to the highest eminence in the State, ranged himself on the opposite side. Mr. Arthur Balfour, then Member of Parliament for the borough of
Defence of Philosophic Doubt. Hertford, published this year a *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, adroitly diverting the sceptical argument from religion to science. Adopting Hume's

principle that the minds of men can only know sequences, and that causes must always be unknown to them, he pointed out that while a scientific "law" or generalisation could not be more than an hypothesis, all sane men acted as if it were demonstrably true. If imperfect certainty were sufficient in science, why should perfect certainty be required in matters of faith? Mr. Balfour's book was severely, almost repulsively, dry, and it was not until he presented the same argument from a higher position in a more intelligible form that he came to be regarded as a popular preacher of orthodox belief. 1876–85.

Most periods of history may be represented as epochs of transition. The constant, or inconstant, flow of change, progressive or reactive, becomes perceptible whenever attention is called to it, and not at other times. During the decade which closed with 1879 both Conservatives and Liberals had insensibly modified their creeds. The Conservatives discovered at the General Election of 1874 that a reduction of the franchise, followed by secret voting, did not necessarily encourage a radical or revolutionary spirit. Conservatism is a temper of mind having little to do with class, and the Conservative workman is just as real a person as the Conservative Duke. For if the rich have most to lose by a redistribution of property, which in this country had never taken a more drastic form than a readjustment of taxes, Socialism affects all property alike, and Local Option, or popular control of the retail traffic in strong drink, would abridge the individual freedom of the working classes alone. Not one of the apprehensions expressed by opponents of Parliamentary reform in 1866 and 1867 had been verified, nor had the real authors of it, Gladstone and Bright, been in power for half the intervening time. The working classes Conservative and Liberal development.

1876–85. in counties, rural or urban, were not enfranchised. The working classes in boroughs voted, like other Englishmen, with their party, and not with their order. Although Liberals in Parliament were committed through Lord Hartington and their own votes to household suffrage for the whole of the United Kingdom, experience did not show that they were certain to gain by it. It did, on the other hand, appear probable that the old Liberalism which limited its aspirations to freedom and self-government was losing its hold upon the people, who expected that the House of Commons would think less of abstract principles and more of material improvement in the lot of the poor. To a clergyman of the Church of England, the Reverend William Blackley, is due the suggestion of a scheme which statesmen were long in taking up, and slow in carrying out. Mr. Blackley, an Irishman, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, was at this time rector of North Waltham in Hampshire. An accomplished linguist, and a highly cultivated man, he had devoted himself chiefly to the encouragement of thrift, and in the *Nineteenth Century* for November 1878 he wrote an article on National Insurance, containing a system of pensions for the aged poor. In September 1879 he preached at Westminster Abbey on National Improvidence; and though the movement he was the first to set on foot has been more successful in foreign countries and British colonies than at home, he deserves a high place among the pioneers of social reform.

Old Age Pensions.

Death of Delane. A brilliant exponent of the older Liberalism parted, like Falstaff, at the turning of the tide. John Thaddeus Delane, who died in 1879, aged sixty-two, had been Editor of the *Times* for six and thirty years. Appointed as a very young man when Sir Robert Peel became Prime Minister with

a majority in 1841, he was by far the most potent influence in English journalism till his retirement in 1877, when the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield was at the most critical stage of its development. Although the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865 deprived him of his most useful friend, he retained through Mr. Lowe his connection with the Liberal Cabinet, and his information was always of the best. But Mr. Delane's chief quality was his independence. He took care to have on his staff men who wrote English, knew history, had large vocabularies, and avoided the stock phrases of the mechanical journalist. He himself revised their articles, and was solely responsible for the opinions they expressed. The *Times* under him was not the organ of any statesman or any party. Its principles, indeed, were cautiously and moderately Liberal. Nor did Mr. Delane ever play the Democrat or shock the City. But within those limits he took his own line, seeking to guide public opinion without being very much ahead of it. To charges of inconsistency he was supremely indifferent. Every number of the *Times* was a unit, and said what it ought to say on the morning it appeared. The views it expressed were not Mr. Gladstone's nor Mr. Disraeli's, but Mr. Delane's, and as the upper and middle class, who alone read his paper, seldom knew what Mr. Delane's opinion would be, they were anxious to see what it was. Mr. Delane's successor, a learned Arabic and Hebrew scholar, unknown to the public, followed in his footsteps. But Mr. Chenery was not Mr. Delane, whose influence was personal and dated from the period when no other journal, English or foreign, could compete in power or in knowledge with the *Times*. 1876-85.

Throughout the decade with which this volume closes the great spirit of Tennyson dominated the region of poetic thought. During his long life his

1876–85. exquisite phrases, stanzas, lines, and half lines had become only less a part of the language than Shakespeare's own. While Browning became more difficult and obscure, so that his warmest admirers turned with relief from his later to his earlier poems, Tennyson retained to the last all his old majesty of diction, splendour of imagery, and richness of thought. Some of his noblest verse, such as the great ballad of Sir Richard Grenville's ship *Revenge*, the incomparable Ode to Virgil, and the magical lines on Catullus, appeared first in the *Nineteenth Century*, making the publication of a magazine a real literary event. Alfred Tennyson and Victor Hugo were in the magnificence of their old age the supreme glory of England and of France.

Tennyson's supremacy.

In politics the authority of age is not entirely advantageous. After Mr. Gladstone's complete victory over Lord Beaconsfield in 1880, when he was himself seventy years old, he held for a decade and a half unchallenged supremacy in the State. When Lord Hartington took office under him after the General Election, the act amounted to an acknowledgment that so long as he continued in public life there was no other possible leader of the Liberal party. The Whigs, who always disliked and distrusted him, dwindled to extinction from decay. The Nonconformists forgot the Education Act, and followed enthusiastically the friend of the Christians in the East. His own Church, the Church of England, was, like all religious establishments, predominantly Conservative, and after Lord Beaconsfield's death found in Lord Salisbury a more congenial chief. Mr. Gladstone had at least this in common with Dissenters, that he abhorred Erastianism, and believed in the freedom of religion from the control of the State. Radicals saw that he was becoming more democratic, less inclined to regard political judgment as a monopoly of birth,

Gladstone's dictatorship.

or wealth, or class, or training. His championship of household suffrage in counties redeemed for him the support of the working classes, alienated by his proposal to abolish the income tax and by his imperfect sympathy with trade unions. His foreign policy, right or wrong, was at least intelligible to the multitude, whom Lord Beaconsfield's showy imperialism did not touch. His zeal for economy, which in his first Government he enforced, was highly approved in homes where every penny of taxation made a difference. He had sat in the House of Commons since he was twenty-three, and after Mr. Disraeli's withdrawal in 1876, he was beyond question the first man there. His eloquence, his knowledge, his resource in strategy and debate, even his splendid presence and his melodious voice, gave him a singular position both in Parliament and in the country at large. Hated and dreaded by his opponents, he was adored and almost idolised by the party which he had not joined till the middle of his extraordinary career. At a period of gloom and disaster in the Soudan a Liberal Member of Parliament, addressing his constituents, and defending as well as he could the Minister's policy, remarked parenthetically that of course even Mr. Gladstone was not infallible. His agent told him afterwards that this was the one sentence in his speech which did not please the audience. "But surely," said the Member, "Mr. Gladstone is not infallible. He is human." "That may be," was the reply. "But the people do not like to be told so." Of course "the people" meant one party in the State. Yet even with this qualification such idolatry was not wholesome. The people, Liberal or Conservative, could hardly criticise the details of the Irish Land Bill. On broad matters of national policy it was right and proper that they should form an independent

1876–85.

1876-85. opinion. Mr. Gladstone's pre-eminence was still more strongly felt in his immediate neighbourhood. Able as some of his colleagues in the Cabinet of 1880 were, he entirely overshadowed them. It was he, and he alone, to whom the public looked. To the question who should succeed him they never gave a thought. Lord Beaconsfield's ascendency may have been as complete. But it lasted a very short time; at the most six years; perhaps not more than four. Mr. Gladstone thought a good deal about his own successor, and would have nominated Lord Granville, about whom the great body of electors knew little, and cared less. Meanwhile he dominated Liberalism, which ought to be rather a republic than a monarchy, and nobody else counted for anything at all. Even when he yielded to the majority of his Cabinet the public took the decision for his own, conceiving, in some respects erroneously, that his colleagues were his clerks. The resignation of John Bright in 1882 had no more practical significance than Mr. Forster's or the Duke of Argyll's. The fall of Khartoum was the first real shock to a personal influence stronger than any political principle, or even prejudice. Then he encountered the Nemesis of his fame. For there were others quite as much responsible for the death of Gordon as he.

The House of Lords.

No Minister since Pitt had done so much as Mr. Gladstone to enlarge, and thereby to strengthen, the House of Lords. In 1861, and in 1871, the Lords had tried conclusions with him, and failed. He had repealed the paper duty, and abolished purchase in the army, despite their uncompromising opposition. If in 1884 the battle was a drawn one, and the issue was removed by the Lords from the sphere of party, the reason was not altogether the mediation of the Crown or the merits of the case. The Lords had ceased to be a feudal aristocracy,

and had begun to represent the middle as well as the upper classes of English life. Mr. Gladstone was lavish in his distribution of peerages, and rich men who were politically active, either in the House of Commons or behind the scenes, might hope to be rewarded with safe seats elsewhere. A peerage conferred for political services has never in England been regarded as a bribe, but as a legitimate acknowledgment of fidelity to a leader. Mr. Gladstone, who had an old-fashioned respect for rank, and a constitutional belief in the hereditary principle, supposed that he was bringing the House of Lords into more harmonious relations with the mass of the people and the current of opinion. That was not altogether the truth. The atmosphere of the Lords is so conservative that few Liberals can resist it in the long run, and Mr. Gladstone's Peers did not in most cases retain their allegiance to him. On the other hand the House itself became an object of envy rather than of jealousy, and some of those who had declaimed against it on platforms were in due time made Peers themselves, with no constituents or ambition to restrain them from voting as they pleased. The Lords were no longer a close body of patricians, guardians of privileges which they had inherited and could not defend. They represented property rather than birth, fortune rather than class; and dread of Socialism, or of Mr. Chamberlain, made many Liberals as well as all Conservatives grateful for the existence of a solid barrier against revolutionary change. 1876–85.

The House of Commons.

While the House of Lords became stronger, the House of Commons became weaker. Members of Parliament were losing their independence, and the strain upon them was far heavier than it used to be. Local associations claimed the right to choose candidates, and even to decide whether sitting Members should stand again. Division lists were carefully

1876–85. scrutinised, and a Member who voted against his party was promptly called to account. Service in the House of Commons was not enough. Electors wanted to see their representatives at brief intervals, and to hear them on every possible subject. The series of political campaigns which Mr. Gladstone began before his election for Midlothian in 1880 set a standard which smaller men were expected to adopt. In the days of Lord Palmerston, and long afterwards, an annual speech sufficed. After 1880 a Member was only a successful candidate, always preparing for the next election. He had to show himself constantly, to make innumerable speeches, and even to perform the lowest function of a vertebrate animal by opening bazaars. For the few who could hope for Parliamentary success it was, of course, well worth while, and for lawyers the House of Commons has always been a by-road to the Bench. But country gentlemen, manufacturers, solid men who had to make an income and provide for their families, found political life distasteful. Politics became less of a taste, and more of a trade. Reasonable expectation of office keeps up a high level amongst a limited class. The rank and file have tended to become the nominees of the caucus, often brilliant and capable men, but devoted to their party rather than to the House of Commons. It is not the intellectual average of the House which has thus been lowered, but its independence and corporate spirit. If a Minister has a majority he can do what he likes. He never needs to ask himself whether the House will stand it, and this is the result of accepting local committees as the spokesmen of the constituencies from one election to another.

The colonies. From 1876 to 1885 the relations of the colonies with the mother country were gradually, almost imperceptibly, assuming a new phase. There was

no change in the law. The constitutional colonies enjoyed absolute independence. Technically Parliament could legislate for them, as for every other part of the Queen's dominions. The Stamp Act, whatever else it may have been, was not illegal. Practically the colonial Legislatures not only taxed their own people, but imposed the same duties on British as on foreign goods. Though entitled to the protection of the British navy in time of war, they made no contribution to it. Except South Africa, where the Kaffirs were still formidable and the Dutch were more numerous than the British, all the colonies provided by their own militia for their own internal order and defence. The Colonial Secretary never exercised the veto of the Crown upon any local statute which was really local, and the appointment of Governors from home was the one formal link between the component parts of the British dominions beyond the seas. Yet, jealous as they were of their rights, the colonial subjects of the Queen were intensely loyal. Freedom had not made them anxious to cast off the yoke, for there was no yoke to cast off, but enthusiastically eager to preserve the sentimental tie which is stronger than any parchment bonds. Englishmen were not likely to forget that the offer of assistance from Australia came after the fall of Khartoum, when the position in the Soudan was worst and blackest. There arose a wish for fuller communication with colonial Governments, such as might have forestalled and prevented the German acquisitions in New Guinea. New South Wales was as much a part of England as Surrey, and in the British Empire, if anywhere, union was strength. Vague as the idea of imperial federation is, it became popular because it embodied a feeling of pride in the vastness, complexity, and coherence of British possessions. Size is a vulgar object

1876–85.

1876–85. of worship. But there is nothing vulgar in the admiration of justice and good government established in distant communities on British principles by men of British race. The prevalence of Darwinian theories, natural selection and the survival of the fittest, then at its height, seemed to be exemplified in the ubiquitous success of the Briton, and to make it proper that inferior peoples should disappear. Neither Governments nor Parliaments had much to do with colonisation, the work of individual energy and enterprise. Interference from Downing Street had not been felicitous, and deep down in the hearts of English statesmen, Liberal or Conservative, since 1782, was the conviction that to meddle with colonies was to lose them. Transportation had been given up when the colonists objected to it. The Federation of Canada from within had been a splendid success. The attempt to federate South Africa from without had been an utter failure. In Australia the suggestion of Lord Derby had been taken up. But the colonies were divided in opinion, and the movement seemed to be premature. To imperial federation, even if Canada had common interests with Australia, India was the great obstacle, and without India it would be absurd. Mr. Gladstone could never be brought to take any interest in the subject, believing, as he did, that the colonies were best left to themselves. Mr. Bright was always contemptuous of new-fangled constitutions, and Lord Beaconsfield confined himself to regrets for the lost opportunities of the past. The principal champions of Federation were, among the older men, Mr. Forster, and among the younger men Lord Rosebery. The movement was popular in the colonies, and useful at home, because it encouraged the growth of mutual confidence and respect between the mother country and her

children. But a long time had to elapse before anything practical came of it. To surrender the smallest portion of its independence was a thing of which no colony would dream, and a commercial union would imply the abandonment by Great Britain of a tariff for revenue only, or, in other words, of free trade. 1876–85.

It was not for more than thirty years after the repeal of the Corn Laws that agricultural depression became a reality. Access to the markets of the world for food involved not merely the removal of legal restrictions, but the rapid transport provided by steamships, and the instantaneous knowledge of prices conveyed through oceanic telegraphy. Even in 1869, when the last remnant of Protection disappeared with the shilling duty on foreign corn, two thirds of the bread consumed by Englishmen was made from British wheat. The proportion has since been reversed, and the process was gradual. India, Canada, the United States, Russia, and the Argentine Republic began, one after the other, to supply the United Kingdom with food. Under the stress of competition the worst land in England went out of cultivation, and the rent of all land fell. Agricultural labourers did not suffer. Their wages were higher and their food cheaper than before. Their numbers had been reduced by emigration to the colonies and migration to the towns, so that they were better able to bargain with their employers. Tenant farmers suffered severely. They had lived in the prosperous sixties as if good times would last for ever, and when bad times came many of them failed. Landlords in Great Britain were compelled by natural causes to reduce their rents in much the same proportion as the Land Commissioners reduced them for Ireland. They could not diminish their fixed charges, and they became appreciably poorer. They retrenched, Agricultural depression.

1876-85. and let their houses, or lived simply, and gave up entertaining their neighbours, until the squire gradually ceased to be the central figure in rural life. Labourers became more independent, and generally able to read newspapers, so that before they obtained the franchise they could follow political debates. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century England had been almost as purely agricultural a nation as Ireland, and it was not till the second half of the nineteenth that agriculture ceased to be the predominant interest. The free importation of raw material and the free exportation of manufactured goods brought constant increase of business to the larger towns, which drew young men from the country by the magnet of better pay. This shifting of population, inevitable and in some points beneficial as it was, led to the overcrowding of houses, the neglect of sanitary precautions, and a precarious condition of employment, which waxed or waned with the buoyancy or collapse of trade. Among changes in agriculture itself the most remarkable was a steady substitution of pasture for corn-growing wherever the soil admitted of the change. Dairies were profitable when communication with populous centres was not unduly expensive, and allotments or small holdings in the neighbourhood of towns paid landlords better than large farms. Fruit-growing also prospered where the conditions were favourable, but to make a living out of arable land required the most careful scrutiny of details and some knowledge of scientific farming. The old easy life of the jolly sporting tenant, who met his landlord on equal terms in the hunting-field, was at an end. Agriculture was no longer remunerative unless it were pursued with the same patient toil and the same help from science as chemistry or engineering. Ruskin and other sentimentalists protested against

the transformation of England from a garden with a few workshops to a workshop with a few gardens. Conservatives regretted the old rural hierarchy, when the tenant gave the landlord what he asked, and the labourer what he could himself afford. Liberals, satisfied with the improvement in the condition of the labourer, thought too little of the land upon which, like his employers, he ultimately depended. Free trade, though a sound, is a negative policy. It breaks down barriers, but it will not supply the place of scientific knowledge and practical improvements. The British farmers were not an enterprising class, and many of them were ruined because they did not conduct their business on commercial principles. One form of industry cannot supplant another without numerous cases of personal hardship and loss. 1876-85.

During the first three quarters of the nineteenth century the acquisition of land had been a principal object with those who made fortunes in trade. Land was supposed, in a higher degree than gigs, to confer respectability. It qualified for the commission of the peace. It was called, with some meaning which had been lost, a stake in the country. It sometimes carried with it ecclesiastical patronage, and in extreme cases it led to the House of Lords. It had also been a good investment in itself, and there was a comfortable saying that it "could not run away." But as the value of land, at least of agricultural land, steadily sank, the prospect of owning it became less attractive. Brewers, bankers, and lawyers furnished most of the recruits to the Peerage. The best way to be a county magistrate was to be a Tory, and then a very little land would do. Land was heavily rated, whereas a fundholder paid no rates at all. Tenants for vacant farms became less and less easy to get. On the whole, it seemed a

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pity to take great estates from those who had inherited them. The peculiar prestige of real property was declining, and "the scions of noble houses," as the newspapers called them, engaged in business. The feudal spirit was entirely dead, and young England was as though it had never been. To promote and secure the triumph of one political party was the simple object of the Primrose League, and its imposing apparatus was only meant to deceive the vulgar. The old sentimental influence of class and station was yielding to the universal power of money. That golden key unlocked the most exclusive doors, and no other passport was required. The oldest family in England was nothing if it were poor. The newest was everything if it were the richest. In London the luxury and ostentation of the west end grew side by side with the poverty and misery of the east and south. In the country wealth superseded ancientry, and old houses passed into the hands of those who could afford to live in them. Some of the original owners retained them by marrying heiresses from the commercial class in England or the United States. Although the property qualification for the House of Commons had been in terms abolished, a candidate who subscribed to everything was beyond the reach of the law, and the necessary expenses of election could seldom be brought below five hundred pounds. That a peerage should be conferred upon a rich man who had no other qualification than his riches was thought too natural to excite remark, whatever Government might be in power. Under the disguise of democratic forms England was passing from aristocracy to plutocracy, from the control of a class to the control of a purse. If there had been no Egyptian bondholders in this country, there would have been no interference with Arabi, no

The power of money.

campaign in the Soudan, no fall of Khartoum, no loss of Gordon. After all these calamities Mr. Gladstone's Government would not have been defeated in 1885 but for the private influence of the ale kings. What made it most difficult to govern Ireland in accordance with Irish ideas was that the richest Irishmen, the brewers of Dublin and the shipowners of Belfast, were out of harmony with the mass of their countrymen. If the landed interest still maintained a hold upon the House of Commons, or so far as it did, that was because rich men always rally to the cause of property. In local affairs it still exercised real power. The magistrates all belonged to it, and magistrates, besides administering the law, controlled the financial business of the county at Quarter Sessions. Great as the influence of money might be through all classes of society, and all walks of life, corruption was wholly unknown in Parliament or on the magisterial bench. The unpaid servants of the State, rich or poor, did their duty without fear or favour, without affection or ill-will. Only in the London vestries and the Metropolitan Board of Works was even jobbery alleged to prevail. A poor man might sit on a Private Bill Committee, and upon his vote might depend the fate of a huge speculation. But it was never suggested that he could be open to any kind of pecuniary inducement. The difference between a public and a private Bill may not to a philosopher seem profound. But the very men who refused to support Mr. Childers's Budget lest they should offend the brewers would have been speechless with indignation at the idea that their votes could be bought for a railway or a steamship service. 1876–85.

Agricultural depression, though it impoverished some landowners, and brought many farmers to bankruptcy, did not directly concern the labouring

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class. The depression of trade, on the other hand, which by the year 1885 had become serious and general, threw many men out of work, and was severely felt by artizans. British labour is the most efficient in the world, and the captains of British industry have never been lacking in the spirit of enterprise. But there were hampering influences in Great Britain, less felt abroad. The intense Conservatism of Englishmen is nowhere more conspicuous than it is in business, whereas Americans and Germans were always ready to adopt new methods and appliances which offered a better chance of profit than the old. Technical instruction, miscalled education, has played a notable part in commercial progress, and Germany understood it far better than England. Even in science properly so named, and familiarity with modern languages, Englishmen had allowed themselves to be surpassed by their German competitors. For these defects the employers were primarily responsible. Trade Unions, on the other hand, were the cause of difficulties which impeded Great Britain in the struggle for commercial supremacy. Their efforts for raising wages and shortening hours had been upon the whole beneficial, though some strikes were unreasonable, and therefore mischievous. When the Unions began to aim at deliberately diminishing production, they entered upon a more dubious path. Their avowed object was to find employment for more hands, and food for more mouths. But the real road to that result lies through increase and not through reduction of manufactures. The greater the demand, the greater the supply. There cannot be a universal glut. The time had long gone by when employers of labour could regulate either hours or wages at their own discretion. Trade Unions had a recognised position which Parliament had acknowledged by

Decline of British trade.

statute, and they could call out their members at moments of critical importance. Most of their leaders, like most of the employers, were honourable and sagacious men, willing to do what was fair, and to accept any terms that were just. The want of the time was some continuous machinery for regular communication, so that each side might know the case for the other in time to avoid a rupture, and avert a stoppage of work. Of all the causes which contributed to the commercial depression of 1885 there was none more potent than the chronic and mutual misunderstanding of capital and labour. Individual arbitrators, of whom Sir Rupert Kettle, a Judge of County Courts, was the chief, had done great service by the settlement of particular disputes. The establishment of organised conciliation was the next problem for economic statesmanship to solve. 1876-85.

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